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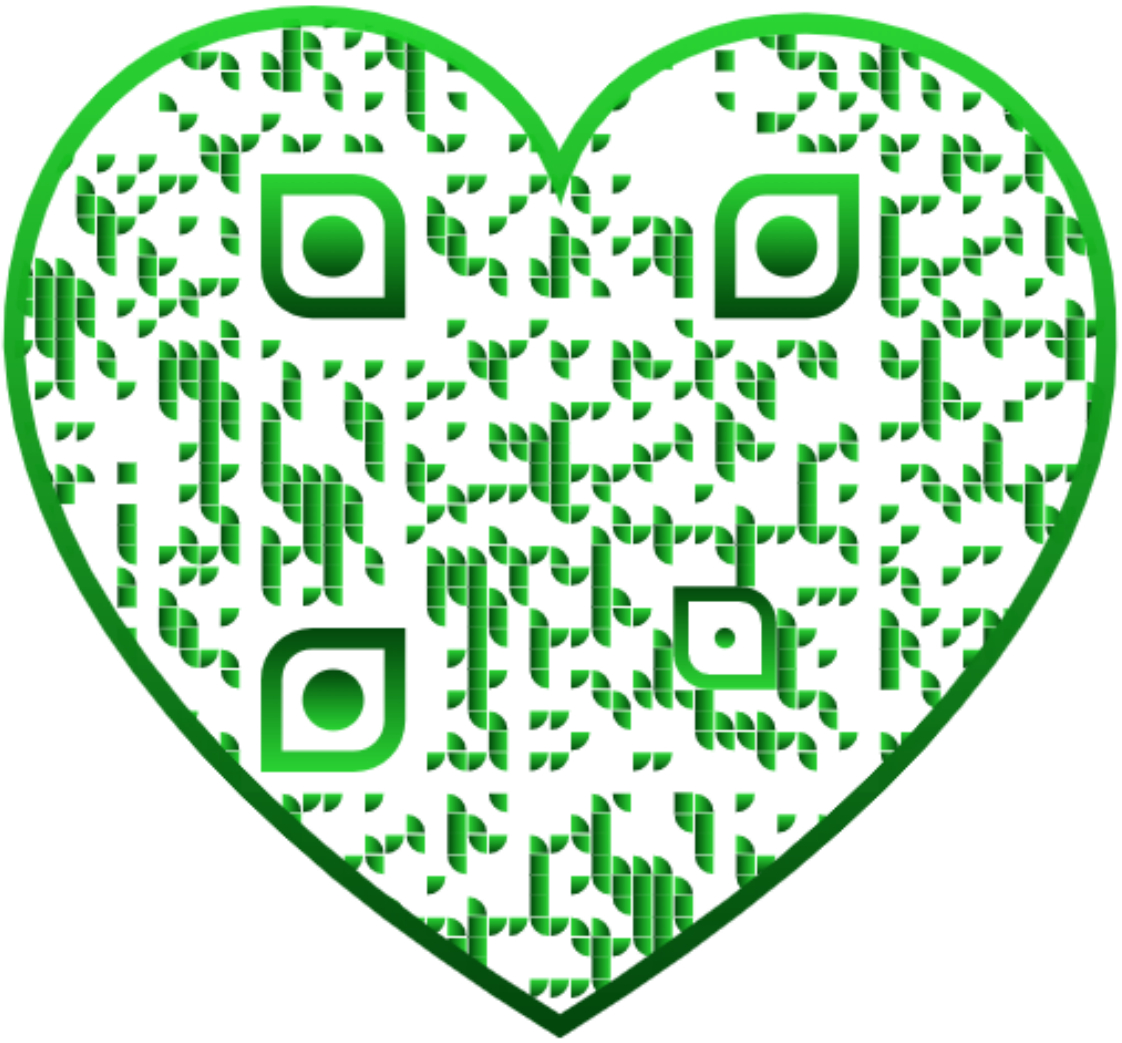

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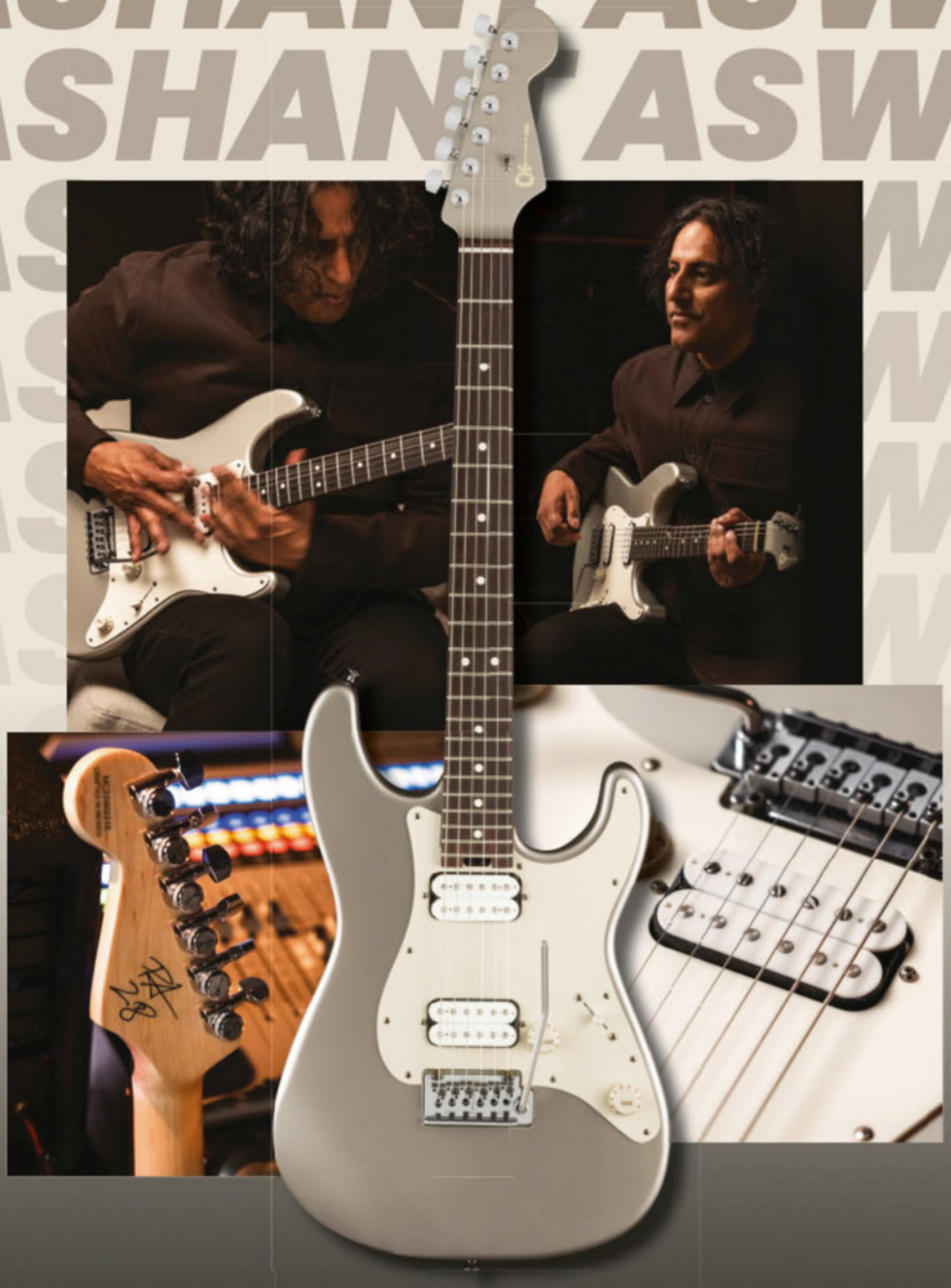

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Metallica's Robert Trujillo [*left*] and Kirk Hammett do their thing in Los Angeles, December 16, 2022

JEFF KRAVITZ/GETTY IMAGES FOR P+ AND MTV

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COVER PHOTO: TOM SACCENTI

WOODSHED

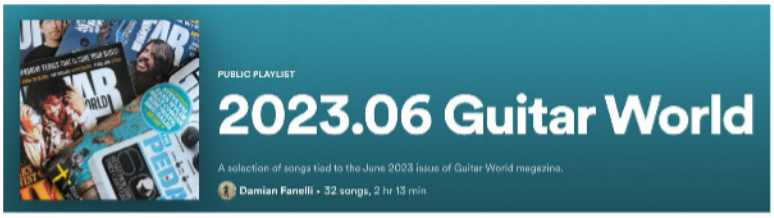
VOL. 44 | NO. 6 | JUNE 2023

YOU CAN PLAY ALONG AT HOME

FIRST OF ALL, I'm sad to say we weren't able to speak to James Hetfield about Metallica's impressive new album, *72 Seasons*; yeah, Het isn't doing any press this time around. But fret not! We've got the album damn well covered with 11 solid pages of Kirk Hammett and another four pages of Robert Trujillo — plus a rare archival 2009 interview with Hetfield (that's making its first-ever appearance in *GW*) where he focuses on his massively influential percussive rhythm-guitar style, complete with two Hetfield-esque riffs by Charlie Griffiths of Haken (a band you might want to check out, by the way) with tabs and audio. Here's hoping James will be unbelievably chatty next time!

SECOND OF ALL, a while ago (on this very page) I had tossed around the idea of creating a Spotify playlist to go with each issue of *GW*. Well, I did it for this issue; let's just hope I stick with it! I tend to put a lot of time and care into playlists, just as I used to do with mixtapes (and CDs) for girlfriends and future wives — and for myself, of course — all of which just adds to the pressure to make it good. Essentially, everyone covered in this issue is represented, including the artists in the Tune-Ups section. In fact, let me give a special shoutout to one of those bands, a pair of brothers who call themselves Hermanos Gutiérrez (page 20). I swear I've played their new album, *El Bueno Y El Malo*, about 197 times; it's the perfect music to listen to when you're editing stories, dealing with PR people and writing headlines and captions (and amazing sentences like this one). Anyway, about that playlist: Head to Spotify and search for "2023.06 Guitar World" (See the lovely visual aid below). I'll also include a direct link to the playlist in my monthly "only in the new issue of Guitar World" story on GuitarWorld.com. Enjoy — read you in four weeks!

— Damian Fanelli



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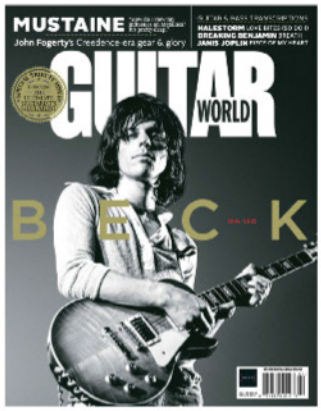


A fine tribute to Jeff Beck

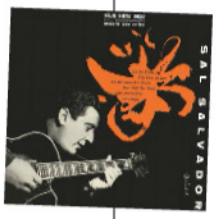
Fantastic *Guitar World* tribute issue [*April 2023*] for one of the all time greats, the one and only Jeff Beck.

— *Edward Hinson*

Wonderful article by Alan di Perna — "Farewell to the Guv'nor, Jeff Beck"!

— *Guy Lee*

Ode to Sal Salvador, a true jazz great



I started out with classical music. I thought I knew my stuff when I played Carnegie Hall in '92. Everything changed in 1995 when I met jazz guitar legend Sal Salvador. He lived in Stamford, Connecticut, within the hamlet of Belltown, a few houses down from my paternal grandmother.

As I played, he asked me, "Why would you use a C major?"

I was stunned. I knew my notes were right and I thought my technique was fine; I was pretty sure I fretted firmly, didn't buzz or mute a string.

"What's wrong with my C?" I asked.

"You could add so much color by changing it just a little," he said. "Why not add a 7th, a 6th, a 6-9 or a maj7♭5 to your chord? And your 7ths are dull. Why not add a 9th, an 11th, a 13th? You don't have to play just major chords. It's a choice. You could even add a sharp 9 (♯9), if you're careful with it."

I listened politely, barely understanding, and probably drove home listening to Jimi Hendrix — who played exactly the same 7♯9 chords in "Purple Haze" (E7♯9) that Sal was trying to teach me about.

Sal again: "Or you could use substitution chords and try introducing the iii [*three minor*] or vi [*six minor*] chord."

Now I was totally lost.

He further explained that I could add a 7th to the basic diatonic [*scale-based*] triads of the C major scale — C (I), Dm (ii), Em (iii), F (IV), G (V), Am (vii), Bdim (vii dim) — and create the following set of diatonic 7th chords, which would all fit what I was trying to accomplish: Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, Am7, Bm7♭5.

It took me another 20 years and countless lessons with Tom Hess, Rory Gordon and others to understand what Sal was trying to tell me. I was unbelievably impressed with Sal's knowledge, his celebrity and most of all how kind and warm he was. It was deeply humbling to get my first real taste of music theory from him. He was an incredible player, a dedicated educator and a good friend to many. I'm honored to have spent time with him.

— *Peter Gray*

Where does he think *GW* is made?

I remember the good ol' days when *Guitar World* had more pages, awesome posters, great (Andy Aledort) transcriptions and was an American publication. What a shame it's become.

— *Blues Breaker*

No room for egos in guitar land

Six-string greetings to all! Just wanted to show my appreciation to you guys for always catering to my every need, guitar-wise. I've been a subscriber to your mag for almost 40 years, and I must say, I've not once been disappointed! Never! I'm an avid metal head so I enjoyed your November 2022 metal issue. I also want to thank you guys for the love you instill in artists to share and collaborate with each other without the ego involved ("Ego Death" by Polyphia and Steve Vai in the December 2022 issue). Awesome! Reading that article actually caused me to shed a few tears, just knowing this is the community I'm a part of.

— *William Heath Yawn*

Some kind words from Ohio

I am serving time in an Ohio prison. I've got a little less than three years left to do. I picked up a guitar about a year ago and quickly fell in love. Not a day goes by that I don't pick up my Gretsch Streamliner. Aside from practicing scales, doing the exercises and *GW* and trying my hand at the monthly tabs are my favorite things to do. I look forward every month to receiving my new issue of *GW*. [*Transcriber*] Jeff Perrin is awesome. Thanks, man. Maybe you could transcribe some more obscure punk stuff, like Against Me! or the Menzingers — or stuff from my favorite self-titled Third Eye Blind album that isn't a radio hit. Either way, I look forward to next month!

— *Kevin P.*

A few tunes to transcribe

Ted Nugent's solo for "Come Again" by Damn Yankees is killer; maybe you could tab that out in a future issue. I'd also like to see tabs for "Smuggler's Blues" and "Heavy Metal (Take a Ride)" by Glenn Frey and Don "Fingers" Felder, respectively. Keep up with the good issues — and [*keep*] celebrating the greats and the new up-and-comers!

— *Blades Harris*

And a few more!

I have been a prisoner in Pennsylvania for 20-plus years. While doing my time and trying to better myself by learning constructive rather than destructive habits, I taught myself to play guitar. Your publication has helped more than you know. I was a subscriber for a good 12 to 15 of those years and actually used your tabs to teach others. I even formed an institution band that performed and raised money for charity within the prison. Sadly, I had to cancel because prices on everything in the world went up — but my sister has since re-subscribed me, and I've noticed a few reprints of tabs you've featured previously. I'd like to request a few songs: "Hocus Pocus" by Focus, "Fall of the Peacemakers" by Molly Hatchet, "Hell and Back" by Metallica, "We Fly So Close" by Phil Collins, "Tender Surrender" by Steve Vai, "Dragonfly" by Shaman's Harvest, "Vice Grip" by Parkway Drive" and "Let Her Go" by Passenger. Here's hoping!

— *Perry S. Richards II*

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OF THE MONTH

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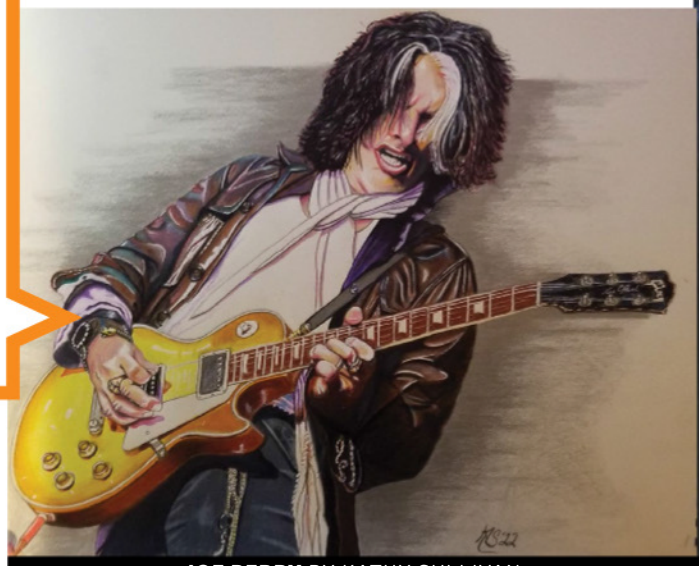

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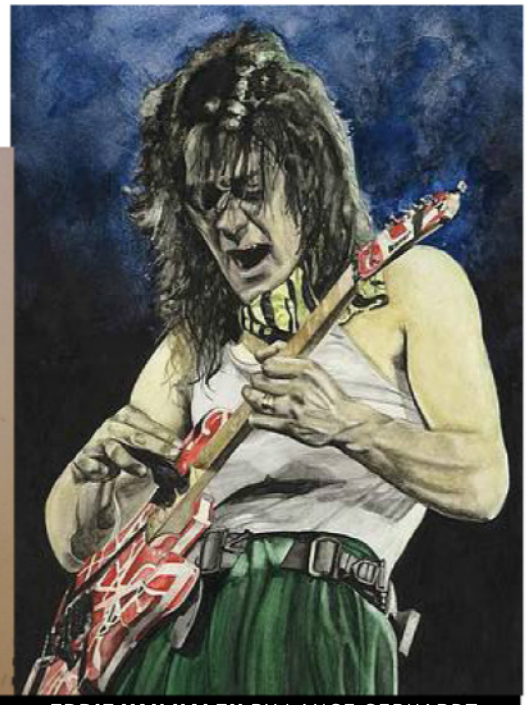

EDDIE VAN HALEN BY LANCE GEBHARDT

DEFENDERS *of the Faith*

Marty Krakowsky

AGE: 46
HOMETOWN: Brookline, MA
GUITARS: ES-135, Les Paul, Firebird, Jeff Tweedy SG, Flying V, Teles, Martin and Guild acoustics
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: RATM "Killing in the Name," Iron Maiden "The Trooper," Pearl Jam "Yellow Ledbetter"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Fender Custom Shop Mike McCready 1960 Stratocaster featured in the May 2021 issue of *GW* — and anything with a sustainer pickup and a Floyd Rose

Oscar Finn

AGE: 17
HOMETOWN: Huntsville, Ontario
GUITARS: Fender Telecaster, Ibanez Iceman, Epiphone EJ-200 acoustic, Squire Showmaster Prism Sparkle and others
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Alice in Chains "Them Bones," Dirty Honey "California Dreamin'," Mammoth WVH "You're to Blame" and originals
GEAR I WANT MOST: Gibson Les Paul Standard '60s Bourbon Burst, Marshall Silver Jubilee Reissue 100-Watt head, Marshall JCM 800 Lead Series 4x12 cab

Sven Amsterdam

AGE: 55
HOMETOWN: Santa Monica, CA
GUITARS: Telecaster(s), Strat(s), Les Paul, Hamer Sunburst and Standard
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Chastity Belt "What the Hell" and "Elena," Goat Girl "Once Again"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Hamer Standard 4-digit

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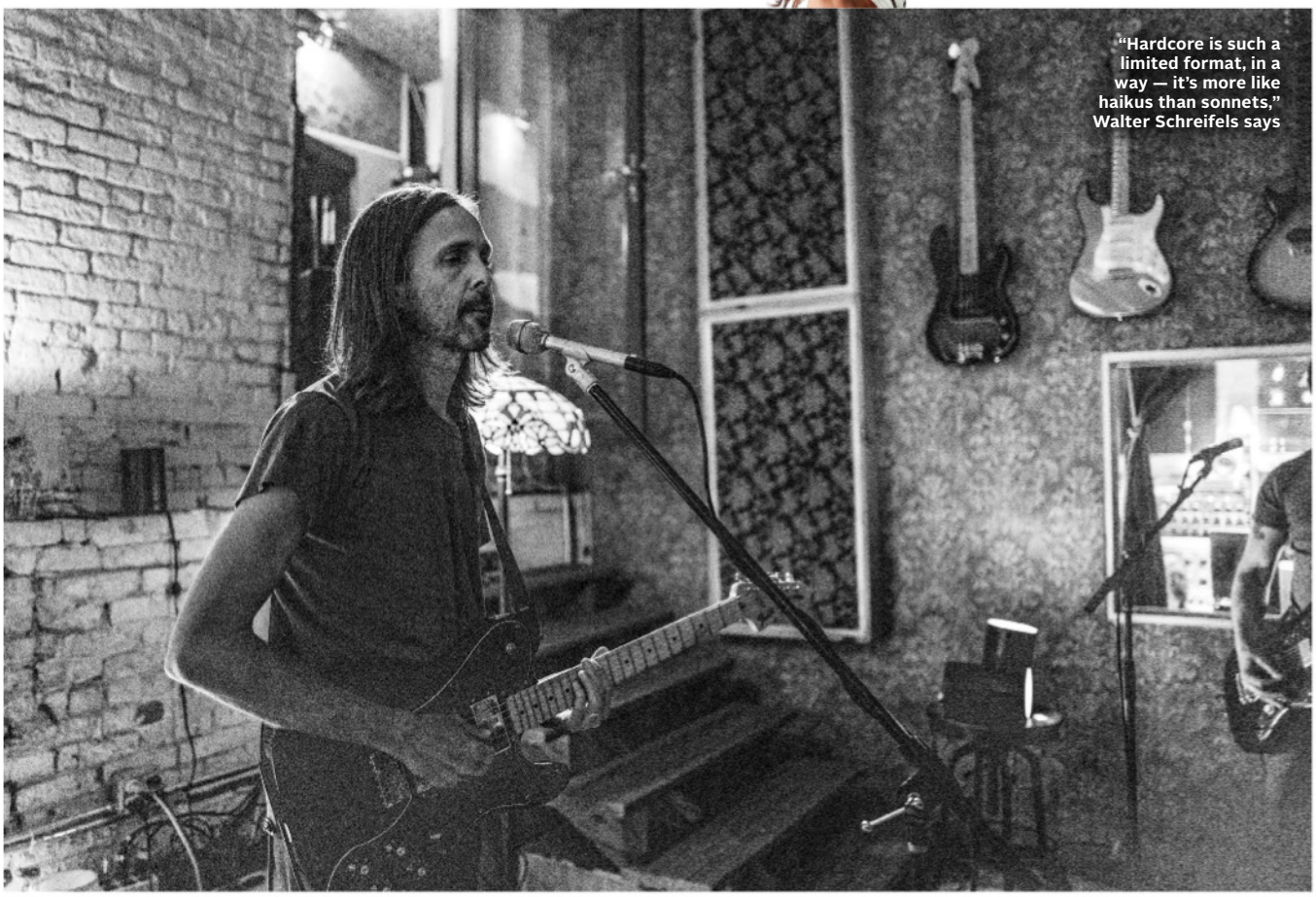
DAVID LINDLEY (1944-2023) 26



"Hardcore is such a limited format, in a way — it's more like haikus than sonnets," Walter Schreifels says

PHOTO BY A.F. CORTÉS

Manic Progression

QUICKSAND GUITARIST WALTER SCHREIFELS REFLECTS ON A LIFE IN HARDCORE

By Jim Beaugez

HARDCORE PUNK MUSIC is simple by design and tribal by nature, focused on eliciting a specific response as opposed to encouraging exploration. It's ironic, then, how hardcore journeyman Walter Schreifels has somehow evaded the genre's strictures to create some of the most compelling and influential heavy music of the last three decades.

"Hardcore is such a limited format, in a way — it's more like haikus than sonnets," Schreifels says. "When I got into Quicksand, I didn't wanna work within the boundaries of that formula of hardcore. I wanted to stretch out, and the guys I was working with all wanted to do that as well."

Of all the groundbreaking bands Schreifels has been involved with — Eighties hardcore pioneers Youth of Today and Gorilla Biscuits, and early-aughts alt-metal underdogs Rival Schools chief among them — Quicksand will be writ large in his epitaph. Emerging in 1993 with their debut album *Slip*, Quicksand bridged the worlds of punk and metal while maintaining the bludgeoning beats of hardcore, the perfect concoction for music fans who loved Nirvana and Helmet in equal measure.

Schreifels had grown up in New York on bands like AC/DC, the Smiths, Echo and the Bunnymen and Velvet Underground before discovering punk at CBGB's hardcore matinee shows. He realized that even his meager musical abilities were good enough to start a band, so he

formed Gorilla Biscuits. He loved how the barrier between bands and fans was always blurred, and because of the music's simplicity he sometimes filled in with bands like Judge, often learning the set on the way to the gig.

"Hardcore has this family vibe where you jump in [*to help other bands*]," he says. "You know, 'Billy's parents said he can't go to Connecticut to play a show, so do you want to play?' The good thing was that the songs weren't hard, and no one cared — that was the other part. [*Laughs*] In hardcore, it wasn't that important to play great as it was to just be about it."

By the time he formed Quicksand, Schreifels had become more ambitious in his guitar playing and songwriting, taking notice of Brian Baker's octave melodies in Dag Nasty, the angularity of Greg Ginn's work in Black Flag, the dissonance of BL'AST! and the use of space by Jane's Addiction.

"We did a tour in England and got a hold of a My Bloody Valentine cassette," he says, "and by the time we did *Slip*, that was our biggest influence. I don't know how much it comes off, as sort of, 'Oh, they're doing shoegaze,' but that's what we were doing."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Fender Jagstang and Jazzmaster, Greco Les Paul Custom
- **AMPS** 1970s Marshall JMP 50-watt combo, Orange Rockerverb

After performing on the inaugural Warped Tour in 1995 and releasing *Manic Compression* — winkingly named for the record's tightly wound mix, which bassist Sergio Vega dubbed the ... *And Justice for All* of hardcore, according to Schreifels — Quicksand splintered.

"The good thing was that the songs weren't hard, and no one cared — that was the other part" [*Laughs*]

Schreifels launched Some Records and put out Hot Water Music's seminal *No Division*, and formed Rival Schools with friends from the New York hardcore scene. With a more streamlined, melodic hard rock sound, the band landed the single "Good Things" in rotation on MTV2, but soon Schreifels moved on to the British invasion power pop of Walking Concert. Non-stop moving is the only constant in his long and prolific career.

"I guess it's that hardcore community thing where bands wouldn't really last for more than a record, and that would be your career," he says. "I may have carried that mentality into my pro career, to where I wanted to work with different people and create different sounds."

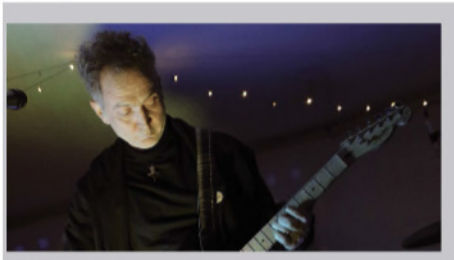
Reforming Quicksand in 2012, and Rival Schools the year before, bucked this trend — but they didn't recycle old riffs or themes. He and Vega, who had been playing with Deftones, brought new perspectives and a more progressive musical mindset to the music they created for 2017's *Interiors*.

"There was no master plan," he says. "We all had to regain our chemistry and figure out, what is our style at this point? What we all agreed on was that we didn't want to rehash ourselves, mainly 'cause I don't think we would've done a good job of it. We had all progressed as players in so many different ways, and as people even more so. Even if you wanted to, that time is over. How do you recontextualize it? It took us a while to get a handle on it."

Since then, his guitar playing has taken new forms. After second guitarist Tom Capone left Quicksand abruptly during the *Interiors* tour, Schreifels had to learn to cover both rhythm and lead; the same thing had happened before a 2011 Rival Schools tour, when Ian Love quit. Each time, he emerged a stronger player, and has channeled those lessons into Dead Heavens, his bluesy proto-metal band, and *Distant Populations*, Quicksand's 2021 release.

"I think I have a good sense of how to improvise and make it sound cool, and I use the tricks I have to the most effect that I can," he says. "And I think that's the trick of my playing. Depending on what you're going for, there's always gonna be different levels of technical skill. It's what you do with it."

INTRODUCING



Abrasive Trees

Epocha *(Shapta)*

SOUND Abrasive Trees is U.K.-based guitarist/singer Matthew Rochford, aided by a fluctuating cast of musicians. Combined, they produce genre-defying sonic explorations that touch on prog, psychedelia, post punk, folk and new wave. Textured guitars repeat hypnotically, at times sounding like Pink Floyd meets the Cure, as walls of delayed vocals add to the magic.

KEY TRACK "Bound for an Infinite Sea"

Screamer

Kingmaker *(Steamhammer/SPV)*

SOUND This hard-rocking Swedish five-piece utilize the twin-ax attack of guitarists Dejan Rosic and Jon Morheim to devastating effect. Unsurprisingly, there's a strong European feel to the band's classic metal vibe, echoing Iron Maiden, Judas Priest and Europe, as virtuoso harmonized solos soar above epic keyboard textures.

KEY TRACK "Burn It Down"

Eamonn McCormack

Eamonn McCormack *(Independent)*

SOUND This Irish blues rocker channels the influences of Rory Gallagher and Gary Moore to produce a fiery, explosive mix of guitar pyrotechnics. Unwilling to be constrained by 12-bar boundaries, McCormack's songs frequently take unexpected turns — all peppered with incendiary soloing and killer riffs.

KEY TRACK "Rock 'n' Roll Boogie Shoes"

— Mark McStea

STEVE MUSCATT (TREES) PROVIDED/PR (SCREMER/EAMONN)

"The theme of *Dirty* is taking the high road when others do you wrong, which is hard to do," Malina Moye says

Malina Moye

THE UNCOMPROMISING STRAT-LOVING SOUTHPAW RETURNS WITH *DIRTY*, A LONG-PLAYER THAT REPRESENTS THE CONSTANT EVOLUTION OF HER SOUND

By Andrew Daly

AS SHE PREPARES to unleash *Dirty*, Malina Moye's ethos is simple: "The music business makes you question things, so you have to know your worth, be undeniable, so you're never ignored. Like Eddie Van Halen said, 'If it sounds right, then it's right.'"

When we think about guitarists who have flipped a Stratocaster upside-down, capsizing the world along with it, a few come to mind. But it's Moye's gutsy style that has kept lefty-leaning licks at the forefront.

"I would get crazy looks from folks shocked to see a woman playing like I do," Moye says. "They were even more confused that I played upside down. They'd say, "Sweetheart, you're holding the guitar wrong; it goes the other way.' I would say, 'Oh, okay,' start playing, and they'd feel stupid and apologize."

Moye knows that when slinging one's ax, sometimes one must kick up a little dust. When asked which of *Dirty's* tracks best represents her, she says, "I'd have to go with 'F.I.N.E.' I love the guitar tones and the feel. I had to use two guitars in the recording process to get what I was looking for. And I like 'Courage,' too. It has delicious chords, is full sonically and has layers. One note in a chord can easily change the structure. It's the little nuances that shape my voice."

Moye has established herself as a player deft in melding funk, blues and rock. But with her last record, *Bad As I Wanna Be* (2018), she began to heavily introduce elements of contemporary music into the mix, leaving fans to wonder how her sound might further progress.

"I wanted to continue that sound," Moye says. "I wanted to make something contemporary that reflects my DNA. The theme of *Dirty* is taking the high road when others do you wrong, which is hard to do. But forgiveness is for you, so you can move on and live a spiritually free life."

"They'd say, 'Sweetheart, you're holding the guitar wrong; it goes the other way.' I would say, 'Oh, OK,' start playing, and they'd feel stupid and apologize"

Moye's penchant for blistering guitar accented by expressive vocals and a demonstrative stage presence have become calling cards. Defined by her early influences, *Dirty* finds the 38-year-old southpaw preparing to establish her definitive sound.

"I'm constantly learning, and my goal is to continue cultivating my sound and style," Moye says. "Maybe it's different guitar tunings or places in my voice I wouldn't normally sing. I'm striving to expose more of myself — my honesty and truth with as much creativity as possible. Music is a personal journey. It's really simple; either you get it, or you don't."

ISAIAH MAYS

"An Italian luthier scalloped the neck on my Strat, but when I got the guitar back I realized I wasn't any faster," Daniele Gottardo says

5 FIVE QUESTIONS
DANIELE GOTTARDO
GETTING TO KNOW THE MAN STEVE VAI ONCE CALLED HIS "FAVORITE NEW YOUNG GUITAR PLAYER"

DANIELE GOTTARDO'S NEW album, *INkBlot*, a series of modern guitar concertos, sees him take his monster chops to another level. He'd already carved out a significant rep while living in his native Italy, with Steve Vai citing him as one of his favorite guitarists. Gottardo's latest release — which follows his relocation to the U.S. — fully embraces his exceptional compositional skills while mixing in his unworldly eight-fingered chops and fully orchestrated sonic soundscapes.

Q: It's been eight years since your last solo album. Why the huge gap?
I did the production arrangement and everything all by myself. With all of the composing, pre- and post-production, it took a really long time. Also, during the time I was working on this project I got married and moved to the States from Italy. Next thing, the pandemic hit. So many things disrupted the process, and they all contributed to the ever-increasing delay in finally getting the record out there. It was a challenging production to achieve without spending huge amounts of money. So I guess it took forever. [*Laughs*]

Q: There are a lot of orchestral instruments on the album. Do you have a compositional background?
I studied guitar, but as far as composition is concerned, I taught myself about harmony and counterpoint and arrangements for orchestration. As I didn't have a strong technical knowledge, it took a lot longer than perhaps it could have.

Q: You show another side of your musical spectrum via your work with the Nuts, which could be described as shred jazz. Is that something you plan to continue?
Yes, definitely. It allows me to explore the idea of improvisation more; in my solo work there isn't any room for improvisation as everything is completely composed. If I deviated from what I'd planned then the harmonies with the orchestral instruments wouldn't work, and it would sound a little chaotic — it would destroy what I was trying to achieve. The two sides are completely complimentary for me, with the freedom to explore jazz and the formal constraints of tightly composed music.

Q: What were the things that first interested you as a guitarist?
Classic rock, particularly Ace Frehley with Kiss on their first records. I also started to get into the American shred artists — then jazz started to come into my influences. I really like the older artists like Charlie Christian and Jimmy Rainey, but I like to play with distortion, so I don't play in a traditional style. I like to stay connected with my art by mixing the distorted guitar sound with traditional bebop phrasing.

Q: You play with scalloped fretboards. Is that Yngwie's influence?
When I was about 15, I discovered shred. I was really trying to improve my speed. I remember thinking Yngwie's playing was amazing, and I wondered if the scalloped neck was his secret. An Italian luthier scalloped the neck on my Strat, but when I got the guitar back I realized I wasn't any faster at all. [*Laughs*] The secret is that there *is* no secret — it's just hard work. I still like the scalloped neck for vibrato and expression, but it was an important lesson to learn.
— *Mark McStea*

IVAN NEBBIA

INQUIRER
HANK MARVIN

THE HERO TO AN ENTIRE GENERATION OF BRITISH GUITARISTS TALKS EMBARRASSING MOMENTS AND HIS FAVORITE SHADOWS RECORDINGS

The Shadows' Hank Marvin in 1963

Q: Who or what inspired you to pick up the guitar?

The initial inspiration for wanting to pick up the guitar was due to skiffle music, which was very popular in the U.K. at the time. Prior to skiffle, I had been listening to people like Big Bill Broonzy, Lead Belly and Brownie McGhee, and I noticed they all had guitars. Then, once skiffle came along, it, too, brought the focus onto the guitar.

Q: What was your first guitar?

A Hofner Congress that I got for my 16th birthday. It was a smaller-bodied guitar with an F-hole design that came with very heavy strings. Sadly, I gave it away to somebody in the late Sixties.

Q: What was the first song you learned to play?

I tried learning to play some skiffle tunes on that guitar. I also used to try and copy things I heard on the radio, where I would try to learn to play the tune that the singer was vocalizing and any sax phrases or orchestral phrases that were like a hook line. But the first song I probably learned from start to finish was "Rock Island Line" by Lonnie Donegan.

Q: Do you remember your first-ever gig?

It was with a skiffle group I had with school friends at a church hall for a youth club. I played banjo while one guy had a tea chest bass, another had a washboard and another guy strummed a bit on guitar as well; he was able to play piano, too.

Q: Ever had an embarrassing moment on stage?

There've been a few of those! One that stands out was this one time when we [*the Shadows*] were playing "Atlantis" and I went totally blank halfway through the first verse and didn't know what to play next! I just had no idea. It was a strange experience, as I didn't know where to put my fingers or what the tune was. I had to stop and start again, and the same thing happened again the second time around, and by this time the audience thought it was a gag, so they were all laughing hysterically. Thankfully on the third time around, it all came back to me, and I played it without any problem.

Q: What's your favorite piece of gear?

My original Meazzi Echomatic 1, which was made in Italy under the name of Meazzi Vox Tape Echo and was being imported into the U.K. by Vox. The great thing about it is you can adjust the speed of the echo and the interplay of the heads as it has several recording heads. Depending on which combination of heads you choose, it can give you a basic slap echo, like that old type of rock 'n' roll echo.

Q: What are some of your favorite recorded moments?

The stuff that was done on our first album [The Shadows, *1961*], not all of it but a lot of it, I'm very happy with. And this is because firstly, we were recording an album and secondly, it was all done in four three-hour sessions. It was recorded quickly and live in the studio. But in later years, where I felt I had improved somewhat, something like 'Cavatina' — the theme from *The Deer Hunter* — I'm very happy with too. That was done quickly too, and most of it in one take. I just had to repair one bit though, a two-bar section, as there was a slight bit of distortion on the guitar where I must have been playing a little too hot and it just seemed to spoil it a little, so I redid it. It has such a great feel and is such a beautiful tune to play. It was a very good moment for me to nail it in one take, and to also get the correct feel and emotion and everything.

Q: What advice would you offer to young guitar players?

Really listen to other people because if you like something someone else plays, a phrase, or the way they approach a song, try and copy that first. But then move on to your own style. Every player starts off by copying, and then they develop their own path — and that's what's important for anyone. — *Joe Matera*

WHAT'S ON MY PLAYLIST

STEFFEN KUMMERER
OF THULCANDRA (and OBSCURA)

1 "How Could I"
Cynic

Unique lines, sounds and tasteful leads. Cynic brought something new and got criticized for not sticking to known and often repeated sounds; as a result, they made a timeless classic.

2 "I'll See the Light Tonight"
Yngwie Malmsteen

The arrangement makes this song so memorable; it tells a full story, front to end. There's a lovely balance between the band members' skills. If you get a chance, check out this song live in Japan in the Eighties; you'll be surprised how well it works in a live setting.

3 "On the Run"
Nestor

There's a certain understatement to the entire band as the focus switches between the instruments. Everyone can hold back when necessary — and shine when pushed into the spotlight.

4 "Master of Puppets"
Metallica

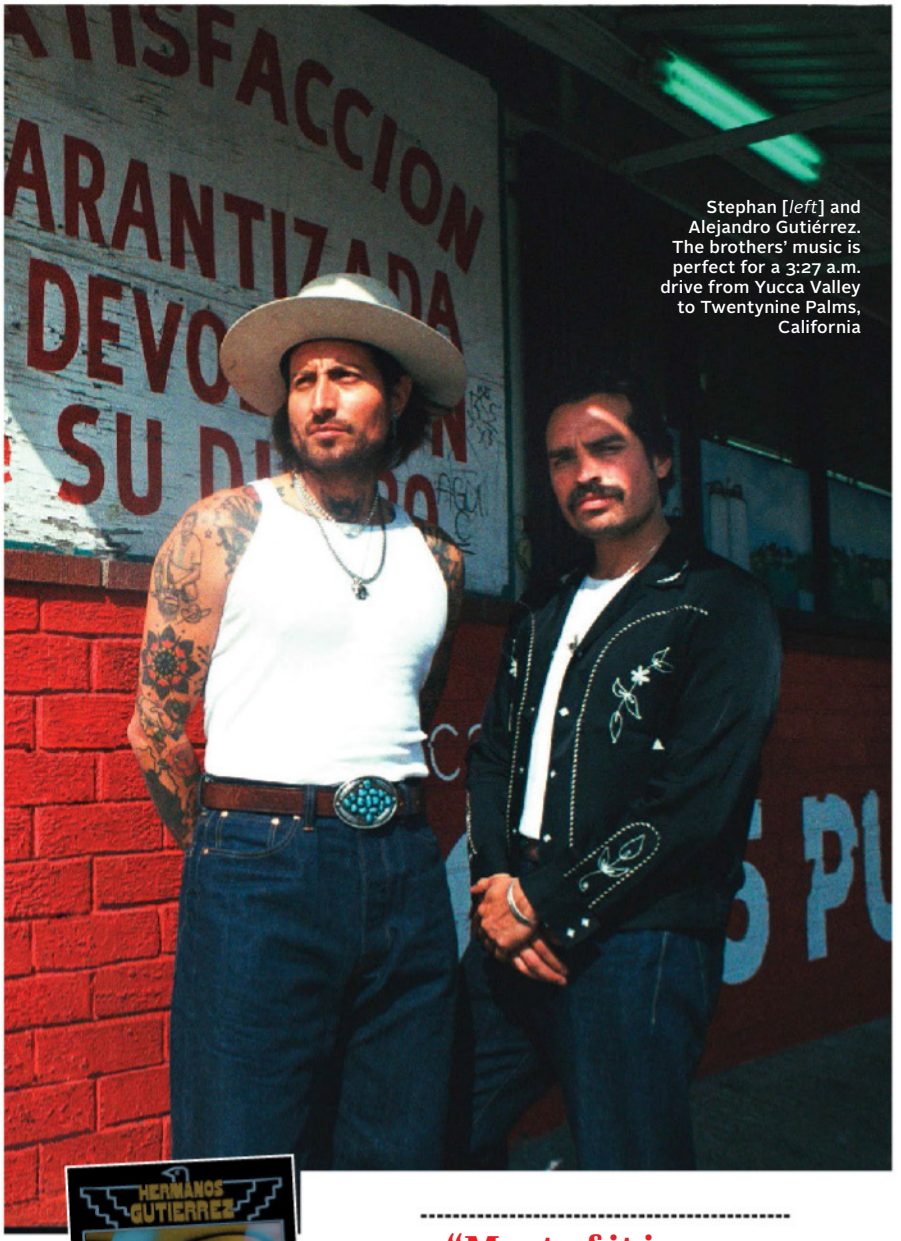
James Hetfield might be the most underrated guitarist on the scene. His tone and performance is unique and natural. When I was 16, I changed my pickups to EMGs just to get closer to his tone.

5 "Called by the Fire"
Ihsahn

When Emperor threw in the towel, Ihsahn continued with his solo project and opened up musically into bright regions somewhere between extreme metal, rock and experimental sounds. His guitar work and choice for tones surprises the listener with every album.

THULCANDRA'S ALBUM, *HAIL THE ABYSS*, IS OUT MAY 19 VIA NAPALM.

POPPERFOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES (MARVIN) CHRIS ROGL (KUMMERER)



Stephan [*left*] and Alejandro Gutiérrez. The brothers' music is perfect for a 3:27 a.m. drive from Yucca Valley to Twentynine Palms, California

Hermanos Gutiérrez

THIS SWISS DUO LEARNED TO TRUST THEIR INSTINCTS ON THEIR LATEST ALBUM OF HIGH-DESERT INSTRUMENTAL GUITAR JOURNEYS

By Jim Beaugez

THE BROTHERS BEHIND instrumental guitar duo Hermanos Gutiérrez, Alejandro and Estevan Gutiérrez, never set out to make music together. But their collaboration was destined to happen.

Growing up in Switzerland, Alejandro began playing nylon-string guitar around age 10, learning the fingerstyle associated with the Argentinian folk music, milonga and salsa he loved. Estevan didn't pick up the instrument until years later, while Alejandro was away in Ecuador. But they never played together until one night when Estevan invited his brother to visit.

"We missed each other 'cause we didn't see each other as much as before," Alejandro says. "He showed me an idea of his and said, 'Something is missing. Maybe you can just play what you feel.' And then we started to play, and his roommate came into the room and said, 'Wow, this sounds amazing. You guys have to play concerts. You have to record, you have to start a band.'"

Hermanos Gutiérrez's music evokes the vast emptiness of windswept high-desert plateaus, deep canyons and other lonely landscapes. Over five albums, they have mastered the art of creating evocative, cinematic textures, using slapback echo and reverb — primarily from their Strymon El Capistan tape echo delay and Strymon Flint reverb — plus wobbly tremolo and the rhythms of milonga and cumbia to create sonic journeys.

"Most of it is non-communicative; it just happens. We trust each other"

"It always starts as an individual trip for us, and then when we think we have something, we share it," Alejandro says. "And there's always a part which is missing, which is my brother's part, or the other brother's part. Most of it is non-communicative; it just happens. We trust each other."

For the duo's sixth album in as many years, *El Bueno Y El Malo*, they teamed with the Black Keys' Dan Auerbach at Easy Eye Sound in Nashville. It was their first time working with an outside producer, and the first time they didn't have their songs mapped before recording.

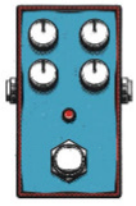
"My approach in the studio changed a lot with that experience," Alejandro says. "I didn't really know what was going to happen in the studio, so I had to trust a lot in my capabilities of playing the guitar. And that meant [*being*] in the moment where you have to deliver, and having that trust that it's gonna be all right."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Silvertone 1446, 1940s Rickenbacker lap steel (Alejandro); Gretsch G6120 Chet Atkins (Estevan)
- **AMPS** Fender Deluxe Reverb (Alejandro); Fender Princeton Reverb (Estevan)

LARRY NIEHUES

George Lynch [*right*], his small fly-in pedalboard [*top*] and his larger pedalboard



MY PEDALBOARD
GEORGE LYNCH

WHAT THE DOKKEN, LYNCH MOB, T&N, SWEET & LYNCH AND END MACHINE GUITARIST SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Amit Sharma

"I HAVE A small pedalboard that I use for fly-in dates. On that you'll find a Klon, a second-year Malaysian chip [*Ibanez Tube Screamer*] TS808, a vintage script logo MXR Phase 90 and a Radial [*Tonebone*] Vienna Chorus. Luckily, I got the Klon before they went crazy expensive. It's a beautiful thing to own, almost more for what it *is* than what it *does*. I actually use the Tube Screamer more, tightening up my Plexi for heavier rhythms. Say if I'm playing 'Tooth and Nail,' I don't want a floppy low end. The TS808 sucks all that up, making it more defined and mid-rangey. It probably sounds counterintuitive, but I don't use my overdrives as much for leads as I do for rhythms. I might kick them in sometimes, like on 'Mr. Scary,' which needs a bit more gain. Usually, I love hearing just the amp.

"On the larger board the main pedals include my Analog Man King of Tone, which I use sparingly for anything from that Robben Ford-ish world. It's very thick-sounding and I run both sides at the same time, so one overdrive cascades into the other. There's a mid-Seventies [*Electro-Harmonix*] Electric Mistress, which was probably my main modulation sound up until the mid Eighties. It sounds very cool, pure Seventies! You can do the Hendrix thing or dial in Frank Marino-ish jet phasers. I actually got into them because it's what Rick Derringer used in the Seventies. I saw him and had to get one. Pedals like this or the Mu-Tron Octave Divider tend to stay at home. They're too big, too heavy and too noisy!

"I have a Hughes & Kettner [*Tube*] Rotosphere, which is built like a tank. There's a 12AX7 tube in there, so you get that tubey preamp kinda thing. I love the brake on it where you can switch the speed like a real Leslie. I have two Fulltone Deja'Vibes. The red one is one of the first ever made, hand-painted when the guy was working out of his mom's garage. I have the silver one because the red one doesn't always work. It sounds maybe 10 percent less great. It does, however, work all the time!

"Other favorites include my Tone Bender fuzz. There were all sorts of variations over the years, each with different circuits. I believe this is a MK1.5 and the same version Jeff Beck used on *Truth*. There was his Les Paul, this pedal and a Sixties AC30 that was in the studio. That was the tone for the entire album... wow! It doesn't sound like that when I play through it! The [*EHX*] Bass Microsynth is like a cross between the Mu-Tron and a Moog, with more variables like filter sweeps and voice mixes. It sounds massive, especially for Rage Against the Machine single-note riffs. Like a lot of the old EHX stuff, it works great but can be a one-trick pony. Other pedals I might use include a Jimi Hendrix Octavio, a Vox wah, a Univibe and a [*Dunlop*] Fuzz Face."

■ ***IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONLY ONE PEDAL FOR A FULL SHOW:***
"Right now I'm using a Boss DD-500 for delay. I like it because it's rock solid and has a lot of classic sounds, including a Roland SDE-3000 preset, which is so good that, in the heat of the moment, I honestly can't hear or feel any difference."

Wanna see someone's pedalboard? Let us know! Write to GWsoundingBoard@futurenet.com.

GEORGE LYNCH (PEDALBOARDS) MORIA ROSS (LYNCH)

Satchel in action with Steel Panther in Oslo, Norway, sometime around beer o'clock on June 24, 2022

RUNE HELLESTAD-CORBIS/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES (THIS PAGE) ANDREA FRIEDRICH/REDFERNS (FACING PAGE)

Back on the Prowl

SATCHEL — STEEL PANTHER'S RESIDENT SHREDDER — DISCUSSES EVERYTHING FROM PAUL GILBERT'S PICKING METHOD, SUPER-EXPENSIVE STRATS, WHY HE DOESN'T USE AMPS IN THE STUDIO AND — LET US NOT FORGET! — THE BAND'S NEW ALBUM, *ON THE PROWL*

By Amit Sharma

WHEN *GUITAR WORLD* connects with Steel Panther axeman Satchel via video conference, he's keen to show off his latest acquisition: a custom Eddie Van Halen tribute model inspired by the late guitarist's instantly recognizable striped signatures. As Satchel explains, a "very awesome" fan of the band approached the Charvel endorsee, offering to build it for nothing in return — one of many perks that come with the job. New instruments aside, Satchel is talking to us today to promote the band's latest record, *On the Prowl*, which features yet more fiery fretwork and Eighties-inspired tongue-in-cheek hilarity. Naturally, we had to find out more...

"Friends with Benefits" has some tasty harmonic minor runs. How did you approach writing that final solo?

That whole section was based around a rhythm guitar riff that's actually pretty complicated. It changes keys throughout the solo, it goes up a whole step and then three half steps. It switches every few bars but it stays in Phrygian dominant, from the harmonic minor family. Every time I play in that scale, I can't help but feel like I'm sounding like Yngwie. He really *owned* that sound. I approach every solo from two mindsets: I think about melody and I also like to improvise.

It's interesting what your fingers come up with when you disengage the brain, right?

Exactly. You might make mistakes or play something you'd normally think sounds horrible and end up really liking it when you listen back. You hear it as a listener rather than a player, so you can be more objective. So that's what I do — nail a few takes and then listen. How does the phrasing sound? What's the vibrato like? Is it too busy? If you play too many notes, the average listener won't be able to latch on. I don't care about impressing other guitar players because they're so fuckin' hard to please anyway, especially with all those 6-year-olds shredding on Instagram.

You tend to use your Charvel signature model and EVH amps for live shows. Was there anything different in the studio this time around?

For leads, a lot of the time it wasn't a real amp — there's no need. I don't think people can tell the difference, plus you can always change your tone later if you want, so I used the Neural DSP Gojira plugin. But I like to commit to sounds too. I still use the second and third versions of the 5150s; they've been on every record, particularly for rhythms. Guitar players by nature are gearheads... which is actually dangerous. It's better paying more attention to being musical. If you keep fucking around, you won't write a song, let alone a record. And if you don't write a record, you can't have any solos!

This is out of left field, but it's kinda hard to imagine you holding a Les Paul. Do you own any, just out of curiosity?

Oh yeah! I have one Les Paul that really sounds great. If I had to choose a live guitar, I probably wouldn't pick that one because I jump around a lot and like using a Floyd Rose, which keeps everything in tune. But Les Pauls *can* sound great. I also have this $150 Mexican-made Strat that I bought online. I put some Fishman Fluence pickups in it and it sounds amazing. I really like the sound of single coil pickups. It makes me play differently and feel like I'm David Gilmour. Or Yngwie! [*Laughs*] I will occasionally pick up a Strat in the studio. We once recorded a bonus track called "Red Headed Step Child," which had a Whitesnake kinda vibe. We were in this studio called Sphere in L.A. The owner is a total gear guy and I asked him if he had one lying around. He came out with a 1959 Strat in mint condition. It felt so good and was probably worth about 50 grand, so I used that one. But if I had to pick a workhorse guitar, I'd have to pick my Charvel signature... because they give me a million dollars a year! Also Guthrie Govan plays them, and that guy smokes!

Satchel in Berlin, January 28, 2020

"Guitar players by nature are gearheads... which is actually dangerous. It's better paying more attention to being musical"

Some of your alternate picking runs are not for the faint-hearted. How much of that did you learn from Paul Gilbert when you lived with him?

I used to hang out with Paul a lot. He was very inspiring, but one thing I realized early on was that I'd *never* be able to play like him. He has really big hands and this ability to cross strings really fast... only he can do it like that. If you get really good at doing Paul Gilbert licks, you're only going to sound like him. So I took things from him that I felt were really important, like the way he attacks the strings. There's a sound and conviction to that. Another player I learned a lot from is Eric Johnson. I don't talk about him a lot but he's one of the best on the planet. And he's the opposite of Paul Gilbert in how he picks; Paul is a metal guy and Eric is more on the jazz side and picks more lightly. I'm still learning and figuring out the best way to approach my solos.

There's a fair amount of economy and sweeped lines, too...

Yeah, I incorporate a lot of that stuff. There are a lot of licks that feel easier if you go up, down, up, up, down or whatever. There are certain licks where I'll definitely do those mini sweeps. It's more economical; hey, that's why they call it economy picking! The downside of that kind of picking, and Paul Gilbert will be the first to tell you this, is that it can be very difficult to be consistent timing-wise. Say if you're doing those classic Paul Gilbert triplets — he's very precise and his timing is very good. If you're doing three notes per-string triplets with economy picking, it can be very difficult. But do you really want to do that all night? It might sound boring! I think what should drive your technique is how *you* want to sound on guitar. If you practice other people's licks or scales all day long, you will get fast and clean, but it might not sound exactly like you.

I remember Billy Gibbons saying something, back before I was born, when he was probably 100, and he said something to the effect of, "When I practice, I practice sounding the way I want to sound." That makes sense to me. He's not practicing how to do something. A lot of people might see Paul Gilbert and feel inspired, hoping to be as clean and accurate. That becomes their goal. But what you should really do is ask yourself how you want to sound on guitar. That's what we should all be striving for. I think more along the lines of how I want to sound to other people who also like music. I remember buying an Uli Jon Roth solo record a long time ago and listening to the whole record thinking there were only a couple of spots where he played really fast. I thought, "That's fucking awesome!" He didn't feel the need to play fast for other guitar players. He played fast when only he wanted to, when it was right for the music. Eddie was the same; he always did what fit. That's what made him so great.

"The core of the band — [it's been] the same guys for 40 years," says the man in the shadows, guitarist Jim "Kimo" West [*left*], shown performing with Weird Al Yankovic in 2022

DANIEL KNIGHTON/GETTY IMAGES

Jim "Kimo" West

MEET WEIRD AL YANKOVIC'S LONG-SERVING GUITARIST

By Adam Kovac

IN THE PROFESSIONAL guitarist realm, versatility is overrated. The greats are the ones who become extraordinary at one thing: it's hard to picture Stevie Ray Vaughan releasing an acclaimed noise-rock release — or Scott Ian dipping his toes into blues rock.

Then there's Jim "Kimo" West, a guitarist who, for 40 years, has taken on genre after genre, style after style, constantly evolving with the times, with his playing being heard by millions. And he's done all this in relative obscurity, because it's hard to get the spotlight when your frontman is not only one of the most beloved pop culture icons of all time but also perhaps not technically the best — but arguably the most famous — accordion player in an extremely specific genre of music.

Weird Al Yankovic has cemented his unlikely spot in the zeitgeist by spending decades lovingly rewriting lyrics to pop songs, and for that entire time, West has been the guy tasked with just as lovingly recreating the guitar riffs behind those songs. He's put his stamp on Joan Jett's badass punk ("I Love Rocky Road"), Kurt Cobain's angsty grunge ("Smells Like Nirvana") and Don McLean's rootsy acoustic strumming ("The Saga Begins") — and that's just a few of the biggest hits that have gotten the coveted Yankovic Bump.

West spent the years before meeting the Weird One gigging in bars with an assortment of cover bands, which prepared him for his unlikely career turn. "I really have a really broad range of musical tastes, and I can appreciate so many different musical styles and different guitar styles, so it's something I really enjoy doing," he says. "And then trying to nail a particular feel or vibe and tweaking the sound is a challenge, but it's a fun challenge, you know?"

Weird Al's humor is unabashedly dorky but genuine: his is satire that aims to warm instead of mock. Unseen to his adoring audience is the hard work that goes into the satires and pastiches. The parodies are often just as layered and complex musically as the originals — the jokes wouldn't land if it sounded like the musicians weren't taking their work seriously.

While Daniel Radcliffe's performance as Weird Al has gotten the most attention, the fictional versions of Yankovic's band members may be the sleeper stars of the film

For West, that means recreating the guitar sounds of Eighties glam, bubbly pop, punk rock, folk and everything in between. While he'll occasionally switch things up to capture the perfect sound, he says he usually relies on the gear he has on hand, only occasionally renting out new toys to capture the perfect imitation. And when that's not enough, he just heads on back to the woodshed to capture a player's

idiosyncrasies.

"A lot of the sound is in the player's fingers. For example, when we do Al's mashup of [*Dire Straits'*] 'Money for Nothing' with the *Beverly Hillbillies* theme, when I played that live, it's Mark Knopfler. So you've got to play that fingerstyle or it doesn't sound right."

In these dark times, Weird Al is having another of his periodic resurgences. He never fully goes away, but every few years, when a new album comes out or, in this case, the fittingly satirical biopic *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story* is released, the public collectively remembers why we all loved him in the first place.

While Daniel Radcliffe's performance as Weird Al in the biopic has gotten the most attention, the fictional versions of Yankovic's real-life band members may be the sleeper stars of the film. For West, it was "strange" to see British thespian Jack Lancaster as his fictional avatar, but also emotionally true to the actual Weird Al story — West and his bandmates may not have ever actually helped rescue Yankovic from the toxic clutches of Madonna (especially not after the Weird One gets into a shootout with Pablo Escobar and his goons). But the movie is a loving tribute to a joyously singular performer, and it also gives due credit to the people who have stood at his side all this time.

"It was cool" to watch the movie, he says. "And you know, we've been a band for all those years. I mean, the core of the band — bass, drums and guitars — [*it's been*] the same guys for 40 years."

If his main gig has been surprisingly steady for all these years (Yankovic has acknowledged surprise at his staying power), it's also opened some other doors. Between Weird Al albums and tours, West has released a series of albums of his Hawaiian slack key guitar music. In 2021, his solo effort *More Guitar Stories* was recognized with a Grammy for Best New Age Album.

His love for the music was born shortly after he first started playing with Yankovic on a trip to Hawaii. When he first heard slack key music, which involves using open tuning to produce haunting melodies, the "music just touched me and it just felt so much like the place," he says. "The music sounds like the way the place looks; it just feels like it is coming out of the earth."

It's a far cry from his day job, where he dons theme-appropriate costumes while jamming to "Amish Paradise" and "Pretty Fly (for a Rabbi)."

"They are very different," he acknowledges. "I mean, the only common ground is I could get away with wearing a Hawaiian shirt."

Luke Norton [*left*] and H.C. McEntire on stage in Brooklyn in 2018

H.C. McEntire

THE INDIE-ROCK VETERAN EXPLORES NEW GROUND ON HER LATEST ALBUM, *EVERY ACRE*

By Jim Beaugez

ON 2023'S *EVERY* *Acre*, H.C. McEntire made a bold step in her evolution from the noise-rock howler of her younger years into a graceful singer-songwriter — and a crucial ingredient in that transition showed up in co-guitarist Luke Norton.

Whereas McEntire was the sole guitar player in her previous bands and projects, weaving together rhythm and lead elements in her own way, the jazz-trained Norton complemented her playing and freed her to focus more on songwriting than ever before.

"We wrote a lot of the songs together," McEntire says. "He would write a guitar riff or a fingerpicked pattern, then I would write a [*guitar*] melody or vocal melody on top. We negotiate space in a cool way."

McEntire grew up in rural western North Carolina on a steady diet of church hymns and early Nineties country stars like Randy Travis, plus whatever else the radio could pick up in her hometown. While at college, though, her discovery of Neil Young and Sleater-Kinney set her on a different musical path. She picked up a '66 Fender Mustang and spent the next 10 years fronting the mathy post-punk trio Bellefea.

"I played in a punk band with a bunch of pedals," she says, "and I think when I stepped away from that, I started thinking about songs a little differently."

McEntire's aesthetic evolved into Mount Moriah, which marked a turn toward storyteller lyricism and a gentler indie-rock sound, often filtered through Southern Gothic vibes. Playing in the acclaimed three-piece gave her a platform to continue kicking up Crazy Horse-style energy while exploring simpler musical arrangements and developing her vocals and melodies.

But by the time she went solo with 2018's *Lionheart*, McEntire had hit a wall with conventional guitar chords and patterns. "The biggest change or evolution for me as a guitarist happened when I decided to start playing [*and*] writing songs in open tunings," she says. "I fell in love with the guitar again."

Discovering DADGAD tuning — a favorite of players like Jimmy Page, who employed it on "Kashmir" and "Black Mountain Side" — provided her with a fuller sound and renewed excitement for the possibilities of new musical colors and textures. McEntire's subtle chord figures, played on her Harmony Stratotone, and her soaring, Emmylou Harris-esque vocals, are the backbone throughout *Every Acre*. That left Norton to wrestle quivering, feedback-laden licks from a Tele and a semi-hollowbody Eastman on songs like "Turpentine," where his wooly, dissonant leads counterbalance the vocal harmonies from McEntire and Amy Ray of Indigo Girls.

"Our styles are so different," she says of Norton. "It's like this beautiful collage."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** 1964 Harmony Stratotone (flatwound strings), Harmony Bobkat, Kay
- **AMPS** '68 Fender Princeton reissue, Silvertone

WILL OLIVER

David Lindley [*right*] — playing bouzouki — in the studio with Ry Cooder in the Eighties

ROBERT KNIGHT ARCHIVE/REDFERNS

David Lindley (1944-2023)

HONORING ONE OF THE GREATEST AND MOST DISTINCT SLIDE PLAYERS AND MULTI-INSTRUMENTALISTS OF ALL TIME

By Andy Aledort

"THERE ARE TRADITIONS in the world that musicians are aware of — the power of music can do certain kinds of things. You can change somebody's life. A lot of people have experimented with that, want to know what it is, but a lot of it is kept secret. What is it? I have no idea. I think if we knew what it was that made people react to music, we'd find some way to screw with it."

David Lindley, one of the greatest and most distinct slide guitar players and multi-instrumentalists of all time, passed away March 3, 2023, at age 78.

Brilliant and original, Lindley possessed an utterly unique sound earmarked by the touch, tone, phrasing and articulation of a true master musician.

The line on Lindley has always been, "If it's got strings on it, David plays it." Among the many instruments in his arsenal were the guitar, banjo, mandolin, violin, lap steel, Hawaiian guitar, electric and upright bass, as well as the more exotic hardingfele, tambour, oud, bouzouki, cumbus, saz, cittern, baglama, gumbus, charango and zither.

The first time I saw Lindley live was with Ry Cooder at NYC's Beacon Theater on October 13, 1990. He had nearly a dozen different instruments behind him onstage, and he switched from one to another as the night progressed.

The band featured Ry and David on

Lindley at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, April 30, 1994

vocals, guitars and other stringed instruments, Ry's son Joachim on percussion and the R&B/soul singers Terry Evans, Bobby King and Willie Green. I mentioned to David that I attended this show — which was *otherworldly* — and he said, "Oh man, you saw *the one!* That was an incredible night. [*Bass singer*] Willie Green is amazing — with that voice, he's my favorite bass player!"

David Perry Lindley was born March 21, 1944, in San Marino, California. His parents' eclectic tastes in music exposed him to a broad range of musical cultures, from European classical music to the Spanish classical recordings of guitarist Andrés Segovia to Korean folk and Indian sitar music.

Lindley's first instrument was the violin, which he began playing at age 3 and continued to play throughout his career. He soon picked up the baritone ukulele and the banjo. By the time he was 18, he had won the Topanga Banjo and Fiddle Contest five times — on both instruments.

In 1964, he formed a bluegrass band, the Dry City Scat Band, with future Nitty Gritty Dirt Band member Chris Darrow (who'd later join David in Kaleidoscope). The Dry City Scat Band performed regularly at the Ash Grove in Hollywood as well as Disneyland — which may explain Lindley's penchant for mimicking the high-pitched voice of Mickey Mouse.

A regular at the Troubadour, L.A.'s premier breeding ground for new talent, Lindley befriended Cooder. Their close friendship resulted in many tours and recording sessions for albums as well as award-winning movie soundtracks, such as *Paris, Texas; Goin' South; Alamo Bay; Trespass* and *The Long Riders*.

In 1966, Lindley formed the genre-twisting psychedelic rock band Kaleidoscope, which released four albums on Epic Records between 1967 and 1970. With Kaleidoscope, he worked on the soundtrack for Michelangelo Antonioni's 1970 film, *Zabriskie Point*, contributing the tunes "Brother Mary" and "Mickey's Tune."

In an interview I did with David in 1991, I asked him what it was like working with the celebrated Italian director. He laughed and said, "Antonioni was very helpful. He'd say things like, 'I want something that is very sad... but happy!' or 'I want something that is very slow... but fast!'"

Lindley also became involved in writing music for television with Mike Post, an old friend from the mid Sixties. Post is renowned for crafting the music to some of the most successful TV shows of all time, including *The Rockford Files*, *Law & Order* and *Hill Street Blues*.

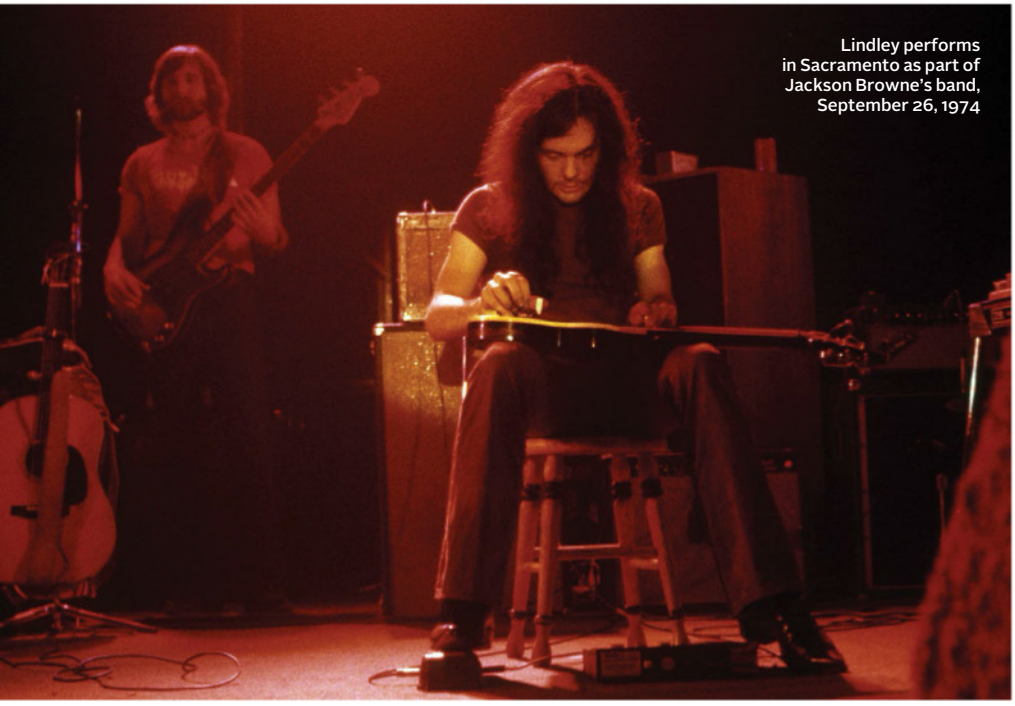
Kaleidoscope's second album, 1968's *A Beacon from Mars*, was one of the first "fusion/world music" albums, as the band combined a blues/rock approach with elements of country, folk and Middle Eastern music. The title track, recorded live in the studio, features a Lindley guitar solo that led Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page to call Kaleidoscope his "favorite band of all time." In fact, in live performance Lindley would use a violin bow to play this guitar solo, which may have inspired Page to do the same.

The line on Lindley has always been, "If it's got strings on it, David plays it"

After Kaleidoscope broke up, Lindley went to England to play with singer Terry Reid. In 1972, he began his collaboration with Jackson Browne, which would prove to bring Lindley into the national spotlight. Browne's 1973 release, *For Everyman*, features David's extraordinary lap steel guitar on the standout tracks, "These Days" and "Redneck Friend." On both songs, his sound on the lap steel is wholly distinct and effortlessly beautiful.

Like many of us — as in, *every guitar player I've ever known* — David Lind-

DAVID REDFERN/REDFERNS



Lindley performs in Sacramento as part of Jackson Browne's band, September 26, 1974

LARRY HULST/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

ley's playing on *For Everyman* was a game changer for me. At the time, I'd just started playing slide after hearing Duane Allman and Johnny Winter, but David was another animal altogether. His was a sound like no one else — a master. The bar was set for every slide player to aspire to.

In 1977, Browne released the most commercially successful album of his career, the seven-times platinum *Running On Empty*. The title track is driven by Lindley's powerful, laser-like lap steel playing. The follow-up single, "The Load-Out/Stay," was another hit and also features Lindley's masterful lap steel work, as well as his wry, high falsetto vocals on "Stay," offering some insight into his distinctly original sense of humor.

Lindley would engage this quirky sense of humor in musical terms and as a performer. He had a predilection for bizarre and outlandish clothing as well as a broad array of unusual instruments, oftentimes opting for cheap pawnshop and Sears guitars, because, as he said, "I love the sound you can get from those kinds of instruments." Among his favorites were his red National Glenwood, a plastic guitar in the shape of the United States. "That guitar is incredible," he said. "When you get a good one, you can do anything with it." Lindley also loved his Teisco Del Ray Spectrum 4.

Lindley has been a sideman and session player to many of the most important artists in pop music history, including Browne, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Eric Clapton, Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt, James Taylor, Warren Zevon, Bonnie Raitt, Joe Walsh, Rod Stewart, Graham Nash, David Crosby, Emmylou Harris, Aaron Neville, Little Feat, Leonard Cohen and many others.

After leaving Browne in 1980, Lindley formed his own group, El Rayo-X. The band afforded Lindley the opportunity to explore the broad range of his eclectic vision, naturally snaking his way through disparate influences by fusing the sounds of blues and rock 'n' roll with Cajun, Zydeco and Middle Eastern music. Lindley's signature tune with El Rayo-X is "Mercury Blues," a hard-grooving lap steel workout that he continued to perform throughout his entire career. Lindley would release three albums with El Rayo-X, 1981's, *El Rayo-X*, produced by Browne; 1982's *Win This Record!*; and 1983's *El Rayo Live*.

Lindley would reconnect with Browne in 2006 for a tour of Spain; recordings from this tour were subsequently released in 2010 as *Love Is Strange: En Vino Con Tino*. Lindley would continue to perform live with Browne on a variety of other occasions.

Late last year, David's family posted that he had been repeatedly hospitalized for kidney issues, pneumonia and influenza, which developed into long Covid with lasting kidney damage. Lindley leaves behind a broad history of recorded works from over five decades that illustrate his one-of-a-kind virtuosity and thoroughly individual musical persona. His music will continue to inspire and enlighten listeners for decades to come.

X-RAYO VISION:
A SELECTED DAVID LINDLEY DISCOGRAPHY

"Clinch Mountain Backstep"
Five String Banjo Greats **(1964)**

"Egyptian Garden"
Side Trips, **Kaleidoscope (1967)**

"Beacon from Mars"
A Beacon from Mars, **Kaleidoscope (1968)**

"These Days"
"Redneck Friend"
For Everyman, **Jackson Browne (1973)**

"Late for the Sky"
Late for the Sky, **Jackson Browne (1974)**

"I Can't Help It (If I'm Still in Love with You)"
Heart Like a Wheel, **Linda Ronstadt (1974)**

"Faith to Arise"
Seed of Memory, **Terry Reid (1976)**

"Running On Empty"
Running On Empty, **Jackson Browne (1977)**

"I Think It's Going to Work Out Fine"
Bop Till You Drop, **Ry Cooder (1979)**

If Walls Could Talk (album)
Ry Cooder and David Lindley live (1979)

"Mercury Blues"
El Rayo-X **(1981)**

"Cold Day in Hell"
"Flop House"
Indian Runner (soundtrack), **with Jack Nitzsche (1991)**

"Afindrafindrao"
A World Out of Time, Vol. 2, **with Henry Kaiser (1993)**

"Train Song"
The Sweet Sunny North: Henry Kaiser & David Lindley in Norway, Vol. 2 **(1994)**

"Lotus Flower"
Wheels of the Sun, **Kazu Matsui featuring David Lindley (1994)**

"Cat Food Sandwiches"
Tango Bango Deluxe, **David Lindley & Wally Ingram (2000)**

"Call It a Loan"
Love Is Strange (En Vivo Con Tino), **with Jackson Browne (2010)**

"Flight to a New Harbor"
Music for Werner Herzog's Encounters at the End of the World, **Henry Kaiser and David Lindley (2013)**

"Everywhere I Go"
Looking Into You: Tribute to Jackson Browne, **with Bonnie Raitt (2014)**

QUOTABLE

Q: SKID ROW'S SCOTTI HILL ON ACE FREHLEY

"When I talk about Ace, people need to understand that this guy was one of the earliest influences — out of anybody — for me. **Before I was a guitar player, I was Ace Frehley for Halloween, so he was on my radar just because I thought he looked cool.** [*Laughs*] And then, once I became a guitar player, Ace's influence and meaning became a whole different thing. Ace is one of those guys who is not technically great, but when you hear him play, you know it's Ace immediately. The second the guy bends a string, you know it can't be anybody else. Ace has been such a massive influence on so many guitar players; he's essential to the whole Gibson Les Paul/Marshall thing." — *Andrew Daly*

Q: WALTER TROUT ON HIS LACK OF PEDALS

"I have this theory that **if you get a kickass amplifier, why would you put it through a $100 pedal?** ... When I started playing in the Sixties, pedals didn't exist. I was playing through a Fender Super Reverb, and I wanted to get a little more out of it. At that time a pedal came out by EHX called the LPB-1. It was a gain boost that plugged right into the input on your amp. It was very elemental and kind of primitive, but I would plug that into the Super. I'd turn the volume down on the Super and run the LPB-1 cranked, and it was great for clubs. When I discovered Mesa/Boogies while I was with John Mayall, I realized that it's basically a Fender that's been souped up and modified and the overdrive is built into the amp... I have [*my Mesa/Boogie Mark IV*] set on Channel 3, the high-gain channel. I have the gain all the way up, and I'm controlling the cleanliness and the whole thing with the volume on the guitar. I play all the time with my pinky wrapped around the volume [*knob*]."
— *Scott Rowley*

From GuitarWorld.com

TRACY ANNE HART/THEHEIGHTSGALLERY (JIMMIE/BUDDY) PAUL NATKIN/WIREIMAGE (PAGE, 1988)

FROM THE GW ARCHIVES

Jimmy Page in late 1990: Is Led Zep coming back?

Q: The [*1990* Led Zeppelin *box set*] prompts two basic questions: Is Zeppelin no more? Or are you, Robert Plant and John Paul Jones waiting for the most appropriate time to do something again?

Well, I love the music — I always have. It's been a major part of my life. As to whether I would like to play it again or not, well, you could trace that back to my Outrider tour, when I did stuff from Yardbirds and Zeppelin, as well. Plus I know the material, which helps! [*Laughs*]

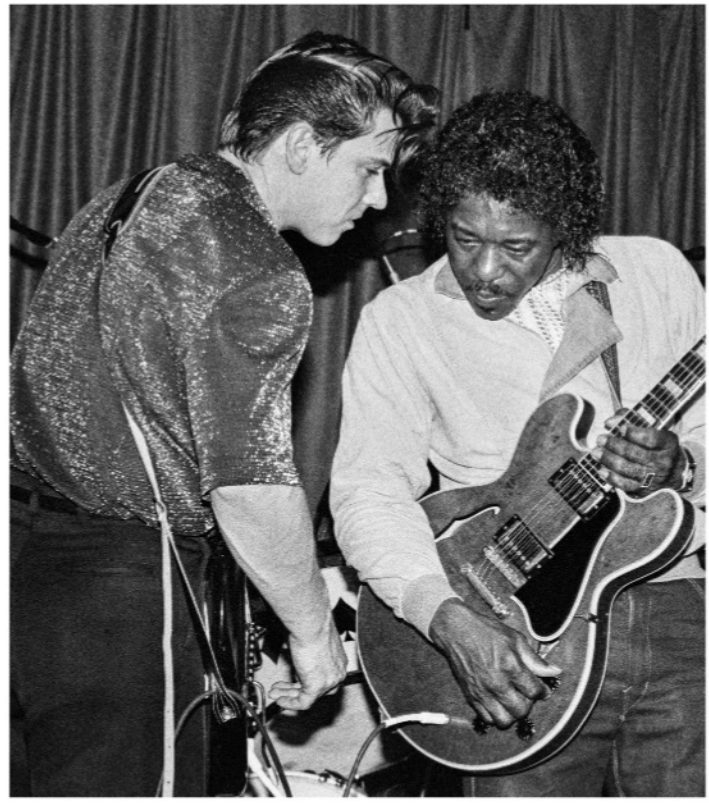
At this point in time, though, all three of us are involved in other things. Robert is busy with his solo career. John Paul Jones is doing some production. And I'm two-thirds through material for my next album. I'm giving it quite a bit of thought — I want to have some pretty good material.

Q: Led Zeppelin is the only "mega-band" that hasn't reunited for an actual tour.

The surprising thing is that we've had meetings about album covers and such. The one thing that hasn't been discussed is, what comes next? It would be good to do it properly. But you'd have to have everyone in the right spirit of things, and doing it for the music. — *Joe Bosso*

From the January 1991 GW

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



"This image of **Jimmie Vaughan** and **Buddy Guy** at the Guadalupe incarnation of Antone's in Austin was taken on March 10, 1984," says photographer Tracy Anne Hart. "It was an early celebration of Jimmie's birthday, which is March 20. Clifford Antone likely set it up for Buddy to guest star at the show. Clifford had the utmost appreciation and love for the pillars of the blues and did everything possible to host them at his club, and quite literally pay his respects. This was my first time seeing the legendary Buddy Guy. It was an amazing show — exactly what my Leica and I needed and wanted to capture."

SIX-STRING WIZ THOMAS McROCKLIN LAUNCHES POLYCHROME DSP

YOUTUBE GUITARIST and educator — not to mention Steve Vai amigo and star of Vai's "The Audience Is Listening" music video — Thomas McRocklin has launched his own plugin company, PolyChrome DSP, and promises a cornucopia of tones for the player who's willing to take his/her sound digital. In fact, the man himself says he's replaced over $3,000 worth of plugins — and "a massively complicated software rack" — all with just one plugin, his signature McRocklin Suite. Sounds intriguing, but what's in the box? Well, four core guitar amps for starters. There's Acoustic and Clean, plus Edge — an amplifier voiced for big cleans and expensive-sounding boutique grit (and everything in between) — and Gain, described as a low-gain amp voicing that's easily transformed into a fire-breather by sticking a drive pedal in front of it. Speaking of which, the PolyChrome DSP plugin also has four gain pedals: Attacker, Shredder, Riffer and Viber. There are also four- and eight-band graphic equalizers and what is intriguingly described as the Heatpressor, a multi-algorithm approach to compression that helps push a guitar track through the mix.

PolyChrome DSP ships with more than 350 presets and is an Apple Silicon native with a latency of 0.045ms. It's available as VST, AU, CLAP or standalone (Windows, MacOS) and sells for an introductory price of €99 (approximately $109, full price €149). Visit polychromedsp.com — or YouTube — for more info.

— *Jonathan Horsley*

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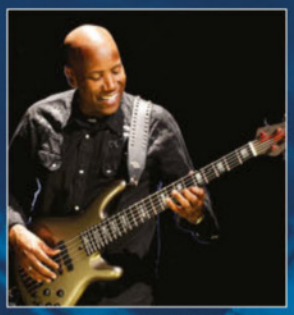


Nathan East

Kirk Fletcher

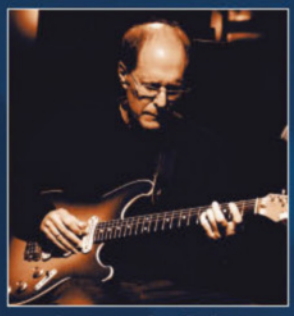
Donna Grantis

John Jorgenson

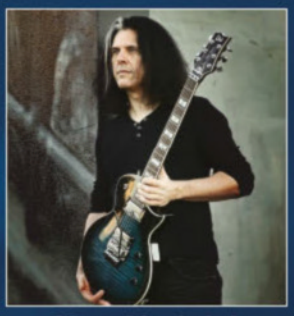
Greg Koch

Christie Lenée

Mark Lettieri



Lorne Lofsky



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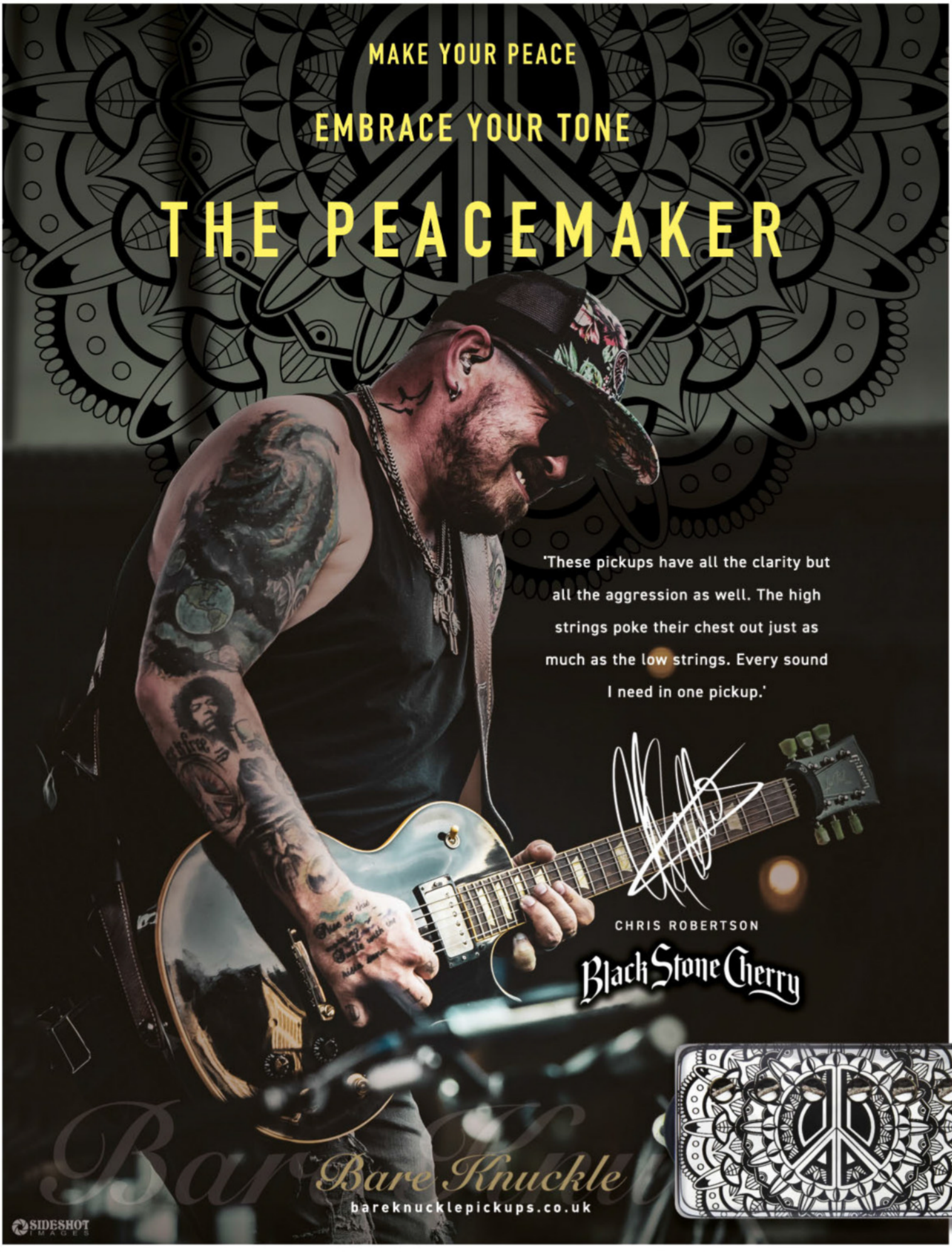
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CHRIS ROBERTSON
Black Stone Cherry
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bareknucklepickups.co.uk
SIDESHOT IMAGES

Gary Rossington performs with Lynyrd Skynyrd in Atlanta, March 15, 2018

RICK DIAMOND/GETTY IMAGES FOR SIRIUSXM

FREE BIRD

A personal tribute to Lynyrd Skynyrd's ultimate survivor, GARY ROSSINGTON

1951-2023

BY ALAN PAUL

AS *GUITAR WORLD*'S unofficial Southern rock correspondent for the past 33 years, I interviewed Lynyrd Skynyrd guitarist Gary Rossington, who passed away March 5 at age 71, many times over many years. He was always insightful, good natured and happy to talk.

A few conversations really stand out. Circa 1996, we did a great phone interview, speaking at length about his sobriety, which was quite new at the time. Shortly after we hung up, my office landline rang again.

"Alan, it's Gary. I need to talk."

"Ok, Gary, what's up?"

"I told you a lie and it's really bugging me."

He corrected himself and apologized. The "lie" he had told me was minor and inconsequential — not something that would've been in the story anyhow — but he couldn't live with it. He was making amends and following the 12-step commitment to honesty, and I was touched by that.

Gary was a survivor and a fighter. Most famously, he survived the October 1977 plane crash that killed singer Ronnie Van Zant, guitarist Steve Gaines and his sister, backup singer Cassie Gaines. Rossington was the last-surviving original member of Lynyrd Skynyrd, though drummer Artimus Pyle, who joined the band later and survived the crash, is still with us.

All of the crash survivors were badly injured. Bassist Leon Wilkeson had his broken arm set in such a way that he had to play in an upright position, prompting me to once ask Rossington if the metal plate he had inserted in his left arm forced him to alter his playing style in any way.

"Not really," he dryly drawled. "I just had to get used to constant, day-in, day-out pain."

He said that with a laugh, adding that he had broken "just about every bone in my body."

Long before the crash, the members of Lynyrd Skynyrd had a reputation for hard living, heavy drinking and regular brawling, and without a doubt, their lifestyle fortified their music with intensity, grit and honesty.

> "It's amazing. After the plane crash, I honestly thought we'd never play together as Lynyrd Skynyrd again"

"The way we lived came out in our instruments, our singing and our songwriting," Rossington said. He recalled an early studio engineer saying that they always looked mad when they played. "We weren't *always* mad," he said. "But we learned to play hard and mean."

The group's three core founding members — Van Zant, Rossington and guitarist Allen Collins — abandoned baseball and turned to music in eighth grade after seeing the Rolling Stones on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. And although seeing Gregg and Duane Allman, as well as Dickey Betts and Berry Oakley's pre-Allman Brothers group Second Coming, had a profound impact on the young musicians, British blues-based riff rockers remained their guiding lights.

"We were influenced by Cream, the Yardbirds, Free, the Animals, the Stones and the Beatles," Rossington said. The underlying key to their sound was filtering that British blues rock sound through their own Jacksonville, Florida, sensibilities and marrying it all with Van Zant's country-tinged songwriting and singing. "Ronnie was really a country singer in a rock 'n' roll band," Skynyrd guitarist Ed King said.

Collins and Rossington had distinctly different styles, as did King and Steve Gaines, who joined the band in 1977, and every other picker who served in the band since their reunion. One thing that always held them together and kept them out of each other's way was Rossington's sturdy, crunchy, rooted playing and his ability to not over play and to stay out of everyone else's way. "We even share solos," Rossington said. "I think having the different sounds keeps things interesting — especially live, when you never know who's doing what."

Two years after the crash. Rossington and Collins formed the Rossington Collins Band, which also included Wilkeson and Skynyrd pianist Billy Powell. Wanting to develop their own sound and avoid comparisons with Lynyrd Skynyrd, the group hired female lead singer Dale Krantz, a move that was as savvy as the Allman Brothers Band replacing Duane Allman with pianist Chuck Leavell; the best way to replace an irreplaceable legend is to pivot. Krantz and Rossington were married in 1982 and she survives him. The Rossington Collins Band released two strong albums before disbanding.

Sadly, Collins remained dogged by tragedy. His wife Kathy died while miscarrying their third child in 1980. His drinking and drug use were out of control, and in 1986, he crashed his car into a ditch, killing his girlfriend and sustaining injuries that left him paralyzed from the chest down. He died in 1990.

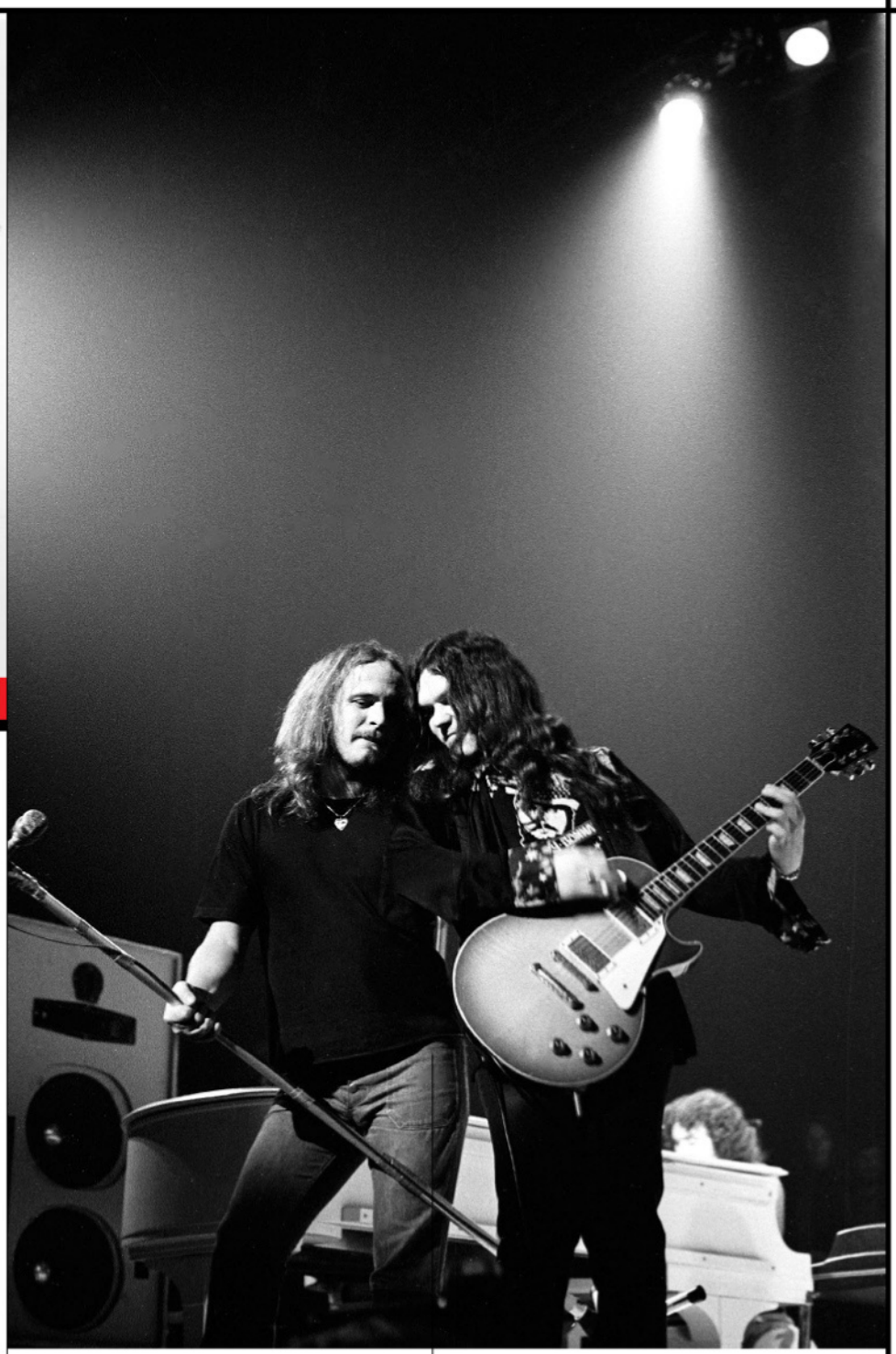
Collins served as a non-playing musical director when Lynyrd Skynyrd reunited in 1987 for a Tribute tour with Van Zant's brother Johnny on lead vocals, and then again in 1991. Though it would've been impossible to predict it at the time, they've pretty much stayed together ever since. No one was more surprised by that than they were.

"It's amazing," Rossington said. "After the plane crash, I honestly thought we'd never play together as Lynyrd Skynyrd again. On the Tribute tour

[*clockwise from left*] **Ronnie Van Zant and Gary Rossington at the Omni Coliseum in Atlanta, July 5, 1975**

A publicity still of Lynyrd Skynyrd circa 1976 [*from left*]: Leon Wilkeson, Artimus Pyle, Billy Powell, Allen Collins (top), Van Zant, Rossington and Steve Gaines

Van Zant and Rossington in action at the Beacon Theatre in New York City, April 10, 1976



FROM LEFT: TOM HILL/WIREIMAGE MCA/CHRIS WALTER/GETTY IMAGES RICHARD E. AARON/REDFERNS

[*in 1987*], the audiences were real receptive and they knew the words to every song."

Rossington said he was especially touched by seeing parents and children singing along together. "The people wanted us to get back together. We weren't planning on it."

The band kept going, recording and releasing new music through a variety of lineup changes over the ensuing 32 years. Wilkeson died in 2001 and Powell in 2009, leaving Rossington as the lone surviving original member in the group.

In 2016, Gary and Dale released *Keep It on Faith*, a stripped-down, bluesy album under the name Rossington. It was his first work outside of Lynyrd Skynyrd in 30 years.

"We kept getting requests from fans to do something like this again, and it was really touching that people liked Rossington Collins so much, so we really wanted to do it for them," Rossington told me. "After all these years of being married and having kids and grandkids, it brought us back together and thinking about those early days in really nice ways."

I last spoke to Gary last year for my upcoming book, *Brothers and Sisters: the Allman Brothers Band and the Album That Defined the '70s,* which includes a fair amount about Lynyrd Skynyrd and the birth of Southern rock. He was, as ever, happy to look back at the band's career from the perspective of a successful elder. We spoke about the impact of the Allman Brothers Band and the power of being an aspiring musician standing in front of Gregg and Duane, who were just a few years older than them, and contemplating what it would take to be that good. But the real turning point for him, Collins and Van Zant, he said, was seeing Free at Skateland, a Jacksonville skating rink that hosted concerts some nights — after the skating.

"We had heard how good this band was and went to see them," Rossington said. "They were late arriving, so they came dragging out Marshall amps and setting up their own gear. They were so cool looking, and then they started playing. And, man, Paul Kossoff was so good and so loud — and there was Paul Rodgers singing his ass off. We were really inspired. Right after that show, the three of us went out and spoke for hours about how it was time to buckle down and get tight. From the time we woke up until we went to bed, we only thought about music from that moment. We were trying to figure out how to get better, what it took. We just wanted to make our mark.

Gimme 10 Songs

GARY ROSSINGTON dissects some of **LYNYRD SKYNYRD**'s greatest songs — and Warren Zevon's "Werewolves of London"! BY ALAN PAUL

ROSSINGTON'S RECOLLECTIONS (BELOW) about the writing and recording of some of his and the band's greatest songs come mostly from a memorable 1993 interview. However, wherever possible, I've supplemented the entries with quotes from some of our later conversations to provide a fuller picture.

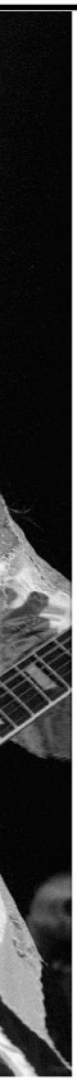
"Free Bird"

pronounced leh-nerd skin-nerd (1973)

"Allen had the chords for the beginning, pretty part for two full years. We were just beginning to write — that was actually one of the first songs we ever completed — and Ronnie kept saying there were too many chords so he couldn't find a melody for it. He thought he had to change with every chord change. We kept asking him to write something to these chords, and he kept telling us to forget about it!

"Then one day we were at rehearsal and Allen started playing those chords, and Ronnie said, 'Those are pretty. Play them again.' Allen played it again, and Ronnie said, 'Okay, I got it.' And he wrote the lyrics in three or four minutes — the whole damned thing! He came up with a lot of stuff that way, and he never wrote anything down. His motto was, if you can't remember it, it's not worth remembering.

"So we started playing it in clubs, but it was just the slow part. Then Ronnie said, 'Why don't you do something at the end so I can take a break for a few minutes?' So I came up with those three chords at the end and Allen played over them, then I soloed and then he soloed. It all evolved out of a jam one night. So we started playing it that way, but Ronnie kept saying, 'It's not long enough. Make it longer.' We were playing three or four sets a night, and he was looking to fill it up. Then one of our roadies told us we should check out this piano part that another roadie, Billy Powell, had come up with as an intro for the song. We did — and he went from being a roadie to a member right then.



LEONARD M. DELESSIO/CORBIS VIA GETTY (SKYNYRD) JEREMY SAFFER/FUTURE (WYLDE)

"Everybody told us we were crazy to put the song on our first album, because it was too long. Our record company begged us not to include it. And when it first came out, they did all kinds of awful edits until it got big enough where it didn't matter any more. It humbles us to think it's been played so much — and it's still played. But it's not magic — it's still just a song to us."

"Gimme Three Steps"

pronounced leh-nerd skin-nerd

"This is a true story. Ronnie went into a bar to look for someone, and me and Allen were too young to get in, so we were waiting outside. We were waiting and waiting, then he came running out with a big ol' guy chasing him, yelling. [*It turns out*] he had started dancing with this chick, and this guy came in and was going to beat him up; Ronnie told him, 'Just give me three steps and I'm gone.' The guy had a gun, he was a redneck and he was drunk — a nasty combination! — and Ronnie said, 'If you're going to shoot me, it's going to be in the ass or in the elbow.' And he took off like a bat out of hell.

"We got in the car and split. He told us what happened and we were laughing — and we kind of wrote the song right there, drove to Allen's house, got his guitar and finished it.

"The more wild experiences you have, the better songs you can write. I'm not necessarily proud of everything we did, but that's just true. We always just considered ourselves a working man's band and thought every song should tell a story people could relate to. When we finish a song, you know what it's about, whereas some groups have songs you may dig but not understand. I think that's why our songs have lasted as long as they have."

"Sweet Home Alabama"

Second Helping (1974)

"I came up with the banjo/steel guitar part — it's just a fingerpicked D, C, G progression — which I kept playing over and over again. Ronnie started writing lyrics at rehearsal one day, saying, 'Play that again. Play that again.' And after about an hour he had all the words. Then Ed [*King*] took it home and put in all the little fills and licks and arranged it.

"It was basically a joke song. We used to travel through Alabama a lot and get onto back roads and just marvel at how pretty it was and how nice the people were. And Neil Young was, and still is, one of our favorite artists, so when he came out with 'Southern Man' and 'Alabama,' criticizing the South, we said, 'Well, what does he know? He's from Canada!' So we threw that line about him in there. We were told by some people to take out the parts about Neil Young and [*former Alabama governor*] George Wallace, but we said, 'Hey it's just a song — we're going to record it the way we wrote it.'

"Most of our songs come through us. It either happens real quick or it doesn't happen at all. Actually, Ronnie wrote most of his lyrics either driving around Jacksonville checking out different neighborhoods — especially poor ones — or in the shower. You know how people sing in the shower? Ronnie did that, but he made up songs — melody, verse, chorus, bridge and all. Many times when we were on the road, he'd end up running into my room with a towel around his waist, dripping wet, saying, 'Check this out. Write some music to [*this*] real quick.' So I'd try to write a few chords to get a rough idea of where the song was going, then either Allen or Ed or I would go back and finish the song.

"Ronnie was a great storyteller. He wrote about things that were going on, things we saw every day, and people related to it — and they still do. He believed that if you had to write something down to remember it, it couldn't have been any good. Who knows how many songs got away because of that. He would write constantly."

"Werewolves of London"

Warren Zevon, *Excitable Boy* (1978)

"This guy [*Warren Zevon*] used the same exact chord progression as 'Sweet Home Alabama.' I mean, you could sing 'Alabama' to his song. It doesn't bother me at all. I can't think of any examples, but I'm sure we did the same thing to somebody at some time. I think it's fine."

"Call Me the Breeze"

Second Helping

"We always liked J.J. Cale. We heard 'Breeze' one night while sitting around the house, and Ronnie said, 'Let's do that!' But it didn't work the way he did it — a real straight shuffle — so I wrote the arrangement, which was completely different. If we had changed the lyrics, it would have been a completely different song. We did the same thing to Merle Haggard's 'Honky Tonk Night Man.'"

"Crossroads"

One More for the Road (1976)

"We did that as a tribute to Cream, one of our all-time favorite bands. We saw them on their farewell tour and they completely blew our minds, so we made this a regular part of our set. In fact, it was our encore for years, until 'Free Bird' became so big that we basically had to do that last. By the time we recorded the live album, it had been such a part of our set for so long that we felt we had to include it. Also, our producer, Tom Dowd, engineered the Cream version, and he told us the story about how it came together, and that really inspired us to want to re-record it."

[*facing page, from left*] Lynyrd Skynyrd's Allen Collins, Ronnie Van Zant and Gary Rossington perform at the Academy of Music in New York City in June 1975

[*right*] Zakk Wylde in 2018. "I wonder whether Skynyrd knew what a grand slam they'd hit with 'Sweet Home Alabama' once it was done," he says

Lend a Helpin' Hand

Zakk Wylde picks his five essential Lynyrd Skynyrd tracks

FREE BIRD

"At 11 minutes, the live version [*from* One More from the Road, *1976*] is even longer than the studio one, but both are amazing. Ronnie wrote the lyric about Duane Allman [*who was killed in a motorcycle accident in 1971*], but I guess now it makes people think of anyone they know and love that has passed away. And down through the years the ripping instrumental jam at the end has become iconic."

SWEET HOME ALABAMA

"I wonder whether Skynyrd knew what a grand slam they'd hit with 'Sweet Home Alabama' once it was done, or, like Robert Plant once said of 'Stairway to Heaven,' that it was a 'nice little wedding song'? They must've known just how special it was at the time because it's as timeless as a peanut butter and jelly sandwich."

I KNOW A LITTLE

"The guitar playing is beyond insane. I first heard it when I was learning how to play and thought: 'God, I'll never be able to do that.' The licks, the phrasing... it's just amazing."

I NEVER DREAMED

"It's one of their less well-known songs, but I really love it. We covered it with Black Label Society [*as a bonus track on the* Mafia *album, 2005*]. The lyrics, the vocal delivery and the guitar parts combine to make it an incredible song."

THAT SMELL

"Again, the guitar playing is phenomenal. I could've picked something more obscure like 'Swamp Music,' but if you haven't heard Skynyrd before, this is a great song to check out."

— Dave Ling (from a 2012 Wylde interview making its first appearance in GW)

[*from left*] Skynyrd's Ronnie Van Zant, Gary Rossington and Allen Collins in the studio with producer Al Kooper [*at the board*] and engineer Bob Langford [*in background*], May 6, 1973

> "Steve Gaines was so good, he was a freak of nature. He used to piss us off because he could do so many things that me and Allen couldn't"

"I Know a Little"
"You Got That Right"
Street Survivors (1977)

"I think these two songs sum up what Steve Gaines meant to the band. He wrote both of them and sang 'You Got That Right' as a duet with Ronnie. He was a great songwriter and singer — and an incredible guitarist. I've never heard anybody, including any of us, play the picking he did on 'I Know a Little' quite right. Steve had a lot to do with the writing and arrangements throughout this album, and his playing was so good, it really inspired us. When he joined, we were kind of in a lull. We were still doing well — selling a lot of tickets and records — but the music was getting a little boring to us. We needed a little spark of inspiration, and Steve provided it. We started getting together and jamming at night. It put us back in the frame of mind we had had at the beginning.

"Steve was so good, he was a freak of nature. He used to piss us off because he could do so many things that me and Allen couldn't. Every time I went to his house or his hotel room, he had his black Les Paul on. He'd order room service and eat with his guitar on. He'd sit around and talk and not play it for an hour, but it would be strapped on. He'd watch TV with it on, play it during commercials, then stop. It was like his third arm."

"Honky Tonk Night Time Man"
Street Survivors

"This is a Merle Haggard song, which we did to show our love for him and for country music in general. Steve played an incredible solo here also, and it was a live first take. He only knew it was a G progression — and he went out and played a mind-boggling solo. He didn't even hardly know the song, but he played the shit out of it. We were standing in the control room with our jaws dropped, and he strolled in and said, 'How'd I do?' We told him to go home and call it a day because we knew it couldn't get any better."

"Simple Man"
pronounced leh-nerd skin-nerd

[*"Simple Man," which was co-written by Van Zant and Rossington, is an epic power ballad, a heartfelt message from a blue-collar mother to her striving son that starts slow and builds to a powerful Rossington solo. It became one of the band's signature songs, but producer Al Kooper didn't like it and didn't want to include it on the album.*] "I love Al. He kind of made us by signing and producing us. We never got along with him as well as we should have; we always wanted to do it our way — and 'Simple Man' is a great example. He didn't like the song at all, but we knew it was good. He went up to New York one weekend and we re-corded it without him, with [*just*] our engineer. When he got back, he liked it. 'Oh, that's a good song!'" GW

TOM HILL/WIREIMAGE

LEO QUAN
BADASS
BRIDGES
ARE BACK!
BADASS BASS II
SCAN ME

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Guitar World's guide to 10 accessories and tools every guitarist should have in their gig bag

P.40

BY AMIT SHARMA

YES, IT'S ALL well and good running through the setlist at home, safe in the knowledge that you have everything you might need within arm's reach. But once you leave the house and get to the venue, as many of us have learned the hard way, there's a myriad of things that can go wrong. Being well prepared for these hiccups is often what separates the amateurs from the pros, and we'd be lying if we didn't say it often starts with the simplest of stuff.

You're going to need extra cables, strings, batteries, picks, batteries, a spare strap as well as things like a power supply for all your pedals, and — depending on the size of the stage — possibly even a power block for the collective amps on each side of the drum kit. It may seem obvious, but when you get a last-minute message from the promoter informing you that soundcheck has been moved an hour or two ahead, these are the things that are easily overlooked in the mad rush.

Duct tape is another essential, as you'll want to keep that setlist firmly under your nose and all those cables running to and from your pedalboard out of the way because, well, coming in on the wrong song and falling over in front of a crowd are the kind of experiences that will haunt you for the rest of your days. And then there's the mental aspect of it all: knowing you've thought ahead and packed everything you could possibly need will help you focus purely on what matters most of all — the performance itself.

Here's a list of our favorite gig tools and crucial accessories that, on top of the aforementioned fundamentals, every guitarist really ought to have with them at all times.

GROOVETECH
GUITAR PLAYER TECH KIT

$59, jimdunlop.com

Most of us aspire to get to a level where one day we'll have an employee responsible for all our setups and soundchecks. Until then, you will probably need to take care of everything yourself — and tech kits like this one from GrooveTech could prove to be invaluable for all those final tweaks before stage time. It comes with 11 color-coded hex wrenches for truss rod and action adjustments, a string cutter/winder, a ruler to check things like neck relief and pickup height, plus a six-in-one screwdriver for all those fiddly components you might need to undo or re-tighten. For those less versed in the art of guitar setups, there's even a guide to help navigate you through it all. Other popular kits include the more affordable Ernie Ball 4114 and the ever so slightly more premium Fender Custom Shop Tool Kit, also made by GrooveTech.

D'ADDARIO
INSTRUMENT CARE KIT
$72, daddario.com

There are many reasons to consider this care kit from string specialists D'Addario — starting with the headstand neck cradle and foldaway mat provided to help ensure you can work on your guitar safely and cleanly without damaging its most vulnerable point and body finish. It comes with four bottles: D'Addario's shine spray cleaner, protect guitar wax, restore detailer and hydrate fingerboard conditioner, as well as a tub of their XLR8 string lubricant and cleaner. And then there's the microfiber polishing cloth and fret polishing system, which should hopefully make your guitar look like it's fresh out of the factory. While some of these products may feel more on the cosmetic side, it's worth remembering that a guitar that feels and responds well to the touch will only help bring out the best in your playing and make for a stronger performance.

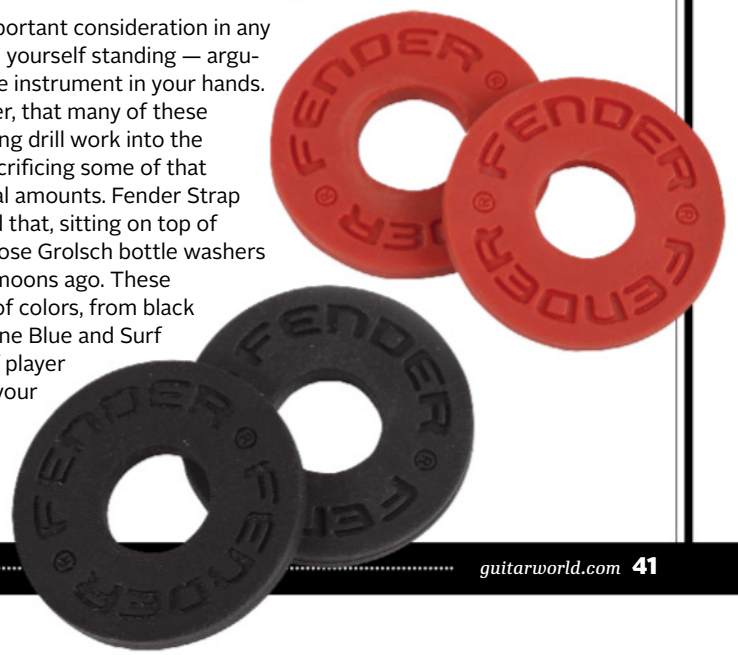
KYSER
QUICK-CHANGE ELECTRIC GUITAR CAPO
$22, kysermusical.com

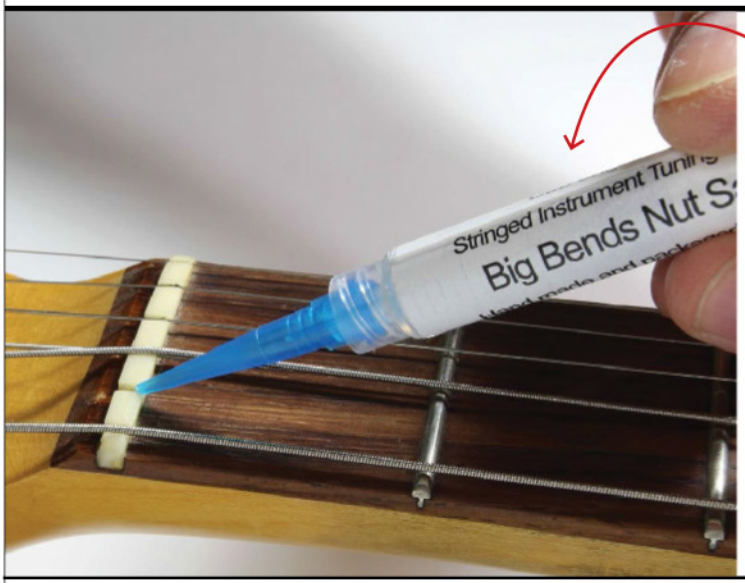
Hand-cut and assembled in East Texas with a lifetime warranty, Kyser capos are among the finest tools of their kind, providing the right kind of tension and fit for just about any kind situation — from ukuleles, classicals and low-action electrics to versions made specifically for partial string coverage or drop-D tunings. They even have a collaborative range with Fender, optimized for a 9.5-inch radius in a host of classic colors, including Butterscotch Blonde, Olympic White, Daphne Blue and Surf Green. The term Quick-Change refers to their user-friendly design, allowing players to move the capo into different positions or completely off the fretboard with minimal fuss. So if you're working with the kind of singer who likes to change keys from night to night or enjoys throwing in "Wonderwall," "Here Comes the Sun" or "Hotel California" as the encore, you'll definitely want one of these in the gig bag.

KNOWING YOU'VE THOUGHT AHEAD AND PACKED EVERYTHING YOU COULD POSSIBLY NEED WILL HELP YOU FOCUS PURELY ON WHAT MATTERS MOST OF ALL — THE PERFORMANCE

FENDER
STRAP BLOCKS
$4, fender.com

Strap locks are certainly an important consideration in any situation where you might find yourself standing — arguably even more so if it's an expensive instrument in your hands. It would be fair to point out, however, that many of these units can feel quite intrusive, requiring drill work into the body of the guitar and ultimately sacrificing some of that precious tone wood, even if marginal amounts. Fender Strap Blocks are an affordable way around that, sitting on top of your strap and buttons much like those Grolsch bottle washers that became a guitarist hack many moons ago. These four-packs are available in an array of colors, from black and red to Fender classics like Daphne Blue and Surf Green. Even if you're not the kind of player who likes to spin the guitar around your back *a la* Yngwie Malmsteen, these branded rubber rings will definitely come in handy.





BIG BENDS
NUT SAUCE LIL-LUBER
$9, bigbends.com

The nut tends to be a criminally overlooked area of any guitar and, as such, a component we often take for granted. A build-up of grease and dirt can alter the tone of your instrument as well as affect tuning stability and string breakages, so it would be fair to say a little bit of TLC can go a very long way. This lubricant from Big Bends comes with an applicator to help you squeeze just the right amount into small places as well as an ultra fine-point microbrush for cleaning it all up. When used correctly, one 0.5cc pack can treat 50 to 75 strings, and also doubles up for usage on the bridge and string guides. As well as helping you avoid tuning slippage and string breaking, a clean nut will also increase harmonics and sustain and assist with overall wear and tear — meaning you will sound better and spend less in the long run.

SNARK
AIR
$29, snarkair.com

When it comes to headstock tuners, we're big fans of the Snark range because they've proven themselves to be every bit as reliable as they are affordable — which helps explain the 25-plus million sales worldwide since the company first launched. Back in December they unveiled their latest gadget, fittingly dubbed the Snark Air because of its stealthy design, allowing users to tune from the back of the headstock as well as the front. The cylindrical display can be rotated 360 degrees in order to be viewed from a variety of playing positions and, much like the Snark Rechargeable released in 2021, doesn't require batteries — offering "weeks to months" of usage from one single charge via the USB connection. Given how headstock tuners can often look quite distracting and uncomplimentary, at least from the audience's perspective, this one definitely seems to offer a lot for little money.

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D'ADDARIO
PRO-WINDER
$11, daddario.com

If you're not thinking you'll require a complete tech kit, you should at the very least own a string cutter and winder — otherwise you may end up suffering the wrath of your bandmates and audience as you waste valuable time trying to restring without one. Look at it this way, the worst-case scenario is your band ends up dropping a song from the setlist and people head to the bar while they wait for a group more worthy of their attention. The durable hardened steel wire cutter can be used for guitars, basses, banjos and mandolins and there's also a bridge pin puller built into one of the arms, which is handy for acoustic strummers. As we all know, getting a string to pitch can take some time; thankfully, the universal peg winder will turn those minutes into seconds and have you ready in the blink of an eye.

DUNLOP

DEREK TRUCKS MEDICINE BOTTLE SLIDE

$20, jimdunlop.com

While we'd be among the first to admit that a guitar slide isn't quite as obligatory as some of the other accessories and tools you'll find on this list, it would still be good practice to have one in your gig bag. You might not even be that much of a bottleneck aficionado, but if the audience end up screaming for "Free Bird" (which we all know they inevitably will), at least you'll be primed and ready to do the late Gary Rossington's wails justice. And if you're going to buy a slide, it might as well be one with Trucks' name on it — given how he's become the most universally admired player to brandish one since the late, great Duane Allman. This particular signature product is said to deliver Trucks' fluid and vocal style with "a bright, cutting and crisp tone." You can't ask for more than that.

IBANEZ

MTZ11 MULTI-TOOL

$20, ibanez.com

Given that they build a lot of guitars with modern appointments and double-locking tremolo systems, it makes perfect sense that Japanese manufacturers Ibanez also produce their own multi-tool — a tiny device that can easily fit inside your pocket and help fix various parts of your instrument. It carries six hex wrenches (all clearly labeled so you know exactly which one to use), a pipe wrench, two Phillips screwdrivers, a slotted screwdriver and a ruler, housing 11 tools in a very small amount of space. There are also five color variations: Biker's Black, Jewel Blue, Metallic Pink, Carbon Fiber Pattern and plain old Red. Whether you need to unlock the nut to retune, adjust the truss rod for optimal neck relief or change the bridge action/angle for the sake of ease and comfort, this handy little thing will be of great assistance.

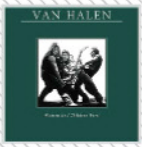
IF THE AUDIENCE SCREAM FOR **"FREE BIRD"** (WHICH WE ALL KNOW THEY INEVITABLY WILL), AT LEAST YOU'LL BE PRIMED AND READY TO DO THE LATE **GARY ROSSINGTON'S** WAILS JUSTICE

GHS

FAST-FRET

$8, ghsstrings.com

It's easy to forget just how much sweat and dirt builds up around your strings; you might not even be able to see most of it, but trust us, it's there. Thankfully Fast-Fret, a silicone-free product from GHS, is something you can apply to help erode all that muck and keep your strings sounding bright and articulate, while also extending their lifetime. The soft applicator also removes grime from your fretboard, lubricating the wood to keep it all nicely hydrated and dust-free. Will it make you play faster? Probably, given that silky smooth strings are easier to traverse at high speeds. Will it make you sound better? Hey, clean strings ring louder and prouder.



EDDIE VAN HALEN USED CHRIS HOLMES' IBANEZ EXPLORER:

"He used [*my Ibanez Destroyer*] on [Women and Children First], yeah. He gave me the guitar that's on the album cover – we switched guitars. He was one of the coolest musicians, an unbelievable player. He had a knack for taking the best from anybody he ever listened to and combined them – Billy Gibbons, Clapton, you name them – and he made it look so easy. He blew my mind."

CHRIS HOLMES

The often-overlooked former W.A.S.P. guitarist looks back on his early years, the height of fame and – oh, yes – that infamous scene in *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years*

By Joe Bosso

AMONG THE MANY memorable (and in some cases, unintentionally hilarious) depictions of rock 'n' roll hedonism featured in Penelope Spheeris' 1988 documentary, *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years*, one scene in particular became something of an instant classic: It's a night time sequence in which an extremely inebriated Chris Holmes, then the wild and wooly lead guitarist for the notorious shock metal band W.A.S.P., lazes about in a chair float in a swimming pool and chugs freely from a bottle of vodka.

"I'm a full-blown alcoholic," he says matter-of-factly to the off-screen Spheeris. He seems sadly self-aware of his own absurdity, yet oddly defiant as he unconvincingly claims, "I'm a happy camper." Throughout the interview, Holmes' words become more unintelligible, and his mood grows darker (he states that he's already had something like five pints of booze that day). Finally, he produces a fresh bottle of vodka, unscrews it and power-chugs roughly half of it before pouring what's left over his head. It's as if he's out to prove some sort of point. But what?

Making the scene all the more surreal – and tragic – is the presence of the guitarist's mother, who sits silently by the pool, her face frozen in a mysterious, inscrutable expression.

It's a moment in rock movie infamy that has dogged Holmes over the years. Reflecting on the scene now, the guitarist heaves a sigh and says, "People started looking at me like I was a drunk. You go on the internet and that's all you see – I'm the drunk guy in the pool. The funny thing is, some people think that scene was faked, which is crazy. I never faked anything in my life. Yeah, I was hammered in the pool, but so what? That's the way I lived my life at the time. I'm a lot different now."

That he is. Sober for the past 26 years, Holmes now leads a quieter and quainter life in Cannes, France, with his French-born wife-manager, Catherine, whom he married in 2012. He quit W.A.S.P. not once, but twice (his final departure was in 2001, and it seems permanent) and has been through several bands before deciding to front his own group, Mean Man, in 2015. With his deep, gravelly voice, gray mustache and goatee, and a general world-weary countenance, the 66-year-old guitarist could easily be mistaken for a grizzled biker. He insists he feels right at home in France. "Things are better for me here," he says. "We've got a dog and a couple of chickens. I never thought I would wind up in this place, but it's good."

Musically, Holmes has found a more receptive audience for his brand of high-velocity metal in France. "The younger kids here still listen to rock – there isn't so much hip-hop," he says. "In the South of

Chris Holmes performs with W.A.S.P. at the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago in 1987. "I'm overlooked, sure," he says. "I don't play with W.A.S.P. anymore, so a lot of people forgot about me"

PAUL NATKIN/GETTY IMAGES

"WHEN BLACKIE SAID, 'IT'S GONNA BE ME ON THE COVER,' I SHOULD HAVE SAID,

France, they're into that, but in most of the country and in Europe, they listen to rock."

He stresses that the idea of returning to the U.S., and specifically Los Angeles, is unthinkable. "L.A. was great when it was great, but now it sucks," he says. "The metal scene isn't there anymore. The clubs are mostly gone. There's no more House of Blues. The Key Club was sold to Beyonce, and I doubt she'll have Deep Purple playing there. I guess big bands like Metallica can still do their thing, but it would be impossible for me to get a band up and running anymore. I know there's still thousands of musicians in L.A., but from where a I stand, things just went downhill."

Leading up to the Covid pandemic, things appeared to be on the upswing for Holmes. His band was gigging regularly throughout Europe, and he attempted to reset his public image via a documentary film, *Mean Man*, which detailed his post-W.A.S.P. life. In early 2022, however, he was diagnosed with throat cancer and was forced to put his career on hold. "I don't know if it was surprising," he said. "I smoked all my life — not just cigarettes, but everything under the sun. I drank for a long time. There was no cancer in my family, so I guess it was self-induced. People might say, 'Yeah, sure, he partied and drank all the time.'" He laughs. "Put it this way: I had a good time."

After undergoing rigorous treatment, Holmes was recently given the news that his throat was free of cancer and that there was no metastasis. Even so, he doesn't yet feel 100 percent. "I'm still suffering from the radiation that went through my neck," he says. "My saliva is like Super Glue. But I'm hoping I can get back to playing shows in a little while. I tried singing the other day, but I didn't have the stamina I need to do a gig. I'll just have to keep at it. I have to sit down and keep singing. It'll come back."

W.A.S.P. were a pretty big band during the Eighties, but people don't seem to mention you when they rank notable guitarists from the metal scene. Do you feel unappreciated or overlooked?

I'm overlooked, sure. I don't play with W.A.S.P. anymore, so a lot of people forgot about me. That movie, *Decline of Western Civilization*, didn't help. The other thing is, when I was in W.A.S.P., I was never allowed to do any interviews with guitar magazines. [*Bassist-frontman*] Blackie [*Lawless*] wouldn't let me. Writers would ask management to talk to me, and they were told I had "other obligations" — shitty things like that. I don't know if that was done to keep me down so Blackie could stay up. Who knows? Shit like that was always going on.

What got you into playing guitar? Who were your big influences?

When I was about 12 or 13, I saw the Jimi Hendrix movie, and that got me into playing the guitar. I thought, "What a job — I wanna do that!" My older brother took me to concerts. I saw Johnny Winter and was blown away. At the time, he played rock. He played good, good, hard rock. He's mostly known for blues, but what turned me on was when he played rock. Brownsville Station — I saw them open for Johnny Winter, and they kicked ass. I saw things like that.

I couldn't read music. Actually, I'll tell you, I have dyslexia. I've never read an entire book during my whole life. Reading music was impossible. Anything I've done was by ear. If you do it enough, you'll get it.

Before W.A.S.P., you were in a few bands — Buster Savage, LAX and Slave. What were they like?

This was back in '74, '75. We played some covers — "Ziggy Stardust," Black Sabbath, Zeppelin. I enjoyed writing our own music. We played hard stuff. They were good groups. I don't have any tapes of them, but I thought they were good.

What was the guitar scene like in L.A. during the early Eighties? Were guys trying to be the hottest and fastest? How did you fit in — or didn't you?

I tried to play fast, but I can only play what I play. I just tried to be myself. The scene was flooded with guitarists, and the competition was unbelievable. It was nuts. I was into playing lead, but I was more into tone. I had the opportunity of growing up around Van Halen, and from that I learned a lot about Marshalls and how to dial in the sounds. In those days, we didn't even have preamps.

You were pretty friendly with Eddie Van Halen. The story goes that he used your Ibanez Destroyer on *Women and Children First.*

He used it on the record, yeah. He gave me the guitar that's on the album cover — we switched guitars. He was one of the coolest musicians, an unbelievable player. He had a knack for taking the best from anybody he ever listened to and combined them — Billy Gibbons, Eric Clapton, you name them — and he made it look so easy. He blew my mind.

When did you start playing Jackson guitars?

Probably about '83. [*Rhythm guitarist*] Randy [*Piper*] and Blackie wanted to play B.C. Rich guitars, and I wanted Jacksons. They have a longer scale. Blackie was like, "I'll get you a deal." We went out to the Jackson shop in San Dimas, and Grover Jackson told Blackie to get screwed. I was kind of bummed about that.

About four months later, we were about to do this movie called *The Dungeonmaster*. I called Grover and said, "Hey, this is Chris, the guy from W.A.S.P. If I were to use one of your guitars in this movie, could I get one made?" And he said, "Now you're talking. You're promoting my product." He brought a guitar down and watched us do the movie. Then he said to come down to the shop, and he made me a guitar. I never signed a contract, but they treated me well. They made me whatever I wanted, but I never asked for more than I needed.

Musically, what was appealing to you about W.A.S.P.?

I had played in a band with Blackie called Sister, probably around '78 or '79. I left them, but I don't know why — probably because of the way I was treated. Then in '82 he called me. He said, "Chris, I've got this band, but it's not going to work unless you're in it." I said, "If it's like Sister, count me out. I'm not into that glam shit." But he said, "This is right up your alley. You can dress in leather, whatever you want."

I had just gotten out of jail for a DUI and was supposed to go back to work. I had collected unemployment while I was in the clink. I went back to live with my mom, but I knew I couldn't work and do the band at the same time. So I told Blackie, "I'll do the band as long as I can play the way I play, and nothing's going to stop me." Musically, I put my influence on it.

'WELL, IF IT'S GONNA BE YOU, THEN I SHOULD LEAVE'"

PAUL NATKIN/GETTY IMAGES

Blackie Lawless [*left*] and Chris Holmes onstage with W.A.S.P. in Chicago in 1987. "In '82 [Blackie] called me," Holmes says. He said, 'Chris, I've got this band, but it's not going to work unless you're in it'"

W.A.S.P. were known for their outrageous stage show. Did you sometimes think the theatrics got in the way of the music?
No. No, no, no. All bands are about theatrics. Look at the record covers — they all say something. I liked W.A.S.P. I didn't look at it like "We are Satan's people." I looked at it like "We are stupid people." [*Laughs*] No, I just looked at it as a group. We had a lot of energy coming off that stage.

Part of Blackie's shtick was throwing raw meat out at the crowd. Did any of that meat ever get in your guitars?
No, but one time some of it ended up in the back of one of my amps. We went to rehearse about three weeks later. We pulled the amp out of a garage where we stored it, and when we looked in the back of it we saw all of these maggots in the meat. [*Laughs*]

Whoa, that sounds rugged!
Yeah, it was pretty gross. The meat had gotten all rotten and stuff, so it smelled. One time during a gig, Blackie took the big meat box and threw it to the side of the stage; it bounced off a wall and hit me in the temple — knocked me out cold.

Did people in the audience mind getting meat thrown at them?
There was nothing they could do. The places were packed, so you basically took your chances. It was intense. I used to tell Blackie, "People can tell which way you're gonna throw it. You have to point one way and then throw the meat the other way. You'll be able to nail people." He tried it and said, "This is way better. People aren't expecting it." [*Laughs*]

You quit W.A.S.P. for a time, then rejoined. Then you quit again and never went back. Any regrets?
No. The only regret I have is that I wish I would have known how the business works in terms of publishing. I was never told about any of that. When records were done, nobody said, "Chris, we have a meeting to split up the publishing." Randy didn't write, [*drummer*] Tony [*Richards*] didn't write, and so the only person they had to keep out of that was me. It wasn't until I got a little older that I found out the stuff that was going on behind my back. That's the way it is. I can't change the past; I can only worry about the future.

Actually, the other regret I have is that I should have bitched about the second album. When Blackie said, "It's gonna be me on the cover," I should have said, "Well, if it's gonna be you, then I should leave." Because it's not a band at that point — which it wasn't. But I still stayed like an idiot and did whatever. I didn't even want to play on the third album. I just went in and did my thing, and I was gone. We weren't even friends at that point.

Did seeing yourself in that scene in *Decline of Western Civilization* serve as a wakeup call for you to stop drinking?
I didn't quit because of that. Hell no! [*Laughs*] I didn't quit drinking till '96. I got a DUI, like, my fifth one. I went to a program, and I listened to what they said. A counselor told me I had to quit drinking, and I said, "You're nuts." Then he said, "One year. If you can quit for one year, you'll never drink again." I told him he was crazy, but he said, "Think of it this way: You can always go back to it." So I thought, "OK, one year — I can do that." After I quit drinking for one year, I saw the incredibly stupid things people do when they're drunk. It blew my mind.

Some years ago, you started fronting your own band. Were you nervous at first being the lead singer?
I don't claim to have the best voice. I don't have the highest range. The first time I ever went out and sang on my own, it was hard. I wasn't very sure about my voice. The second time, I did a show here in France and it was totally different. I felt really confident. I got to the point where I was like, "I don't care if people don't like my voice. They can walk out and do whatever they want."

Do you think you play better sober than during your party days?
No. When I was in W.A.S.P., I never drank before I played. I was always sober on stage. Actually, I only drank one time — it was at the Troubadour. The show took twice the amount of work, and when I got off the stage I was almost dead. I hit the ground and said, "I will never, ever do that again!" I would drink at night and get on stage with a hangover — oh yeah. But from the time I woke up and during the day of the show, I never drank. I've heard people say, "Man, he had four beers with me before he played." They're full of shit.

Let's say you got a phone call from Blackie today, and he says he wants to do a full reunion of the band from back in the day. Would you do it?
I'd say, "You have to pay me the publishing for what I wrote. Then I'd be more than happy to do it. Other than that, I won't do it." There's a lot of stuff I wrote from my heart on those albums, but I didn't get written in for it. I'd be screwing myself if I went and played with him. Why do it? If somebody beats you up, why would you want to go see them again? It's not worth it. GW

"THERE'S A LOT OF STUFF I WROTE FROM MY HEART ON THOSE ALBUMS, BUT I DIDN'T GET WRITTEN IN FOR IT. I'D BE SCREWING MYSELF IF I WENT AND PLAYED WITH HIM"

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The DEATH WISH TWO

After teaming up for a fiery EP late last year, celebrated blueser **Samantha Fish** and Texas troublemaker **Jesse Dayton** have returned with their first long-player, *Death Wish Blues*

BY *Joshua M. Miller* PHOTO BY *Skyler Smith*

SINCE RELEASING *LIVE BAIT*, HER 2009 DEBUT album with the Samantha Fish Blues Band, Fish, a Missouri native, has built a rabid fanbase and garnered mega acclaim (including one of four different November 2019 *Guitar World* covers), thanks in part to an eclectic and energetic mix of styles, including rock, blues, soul and funk, all of which is occasionally delivered with a side of tasteful slide, sometimes played on a cigar box guitar. Since releasing her seventh and most recent studio album, 2021's *Faster*, she's kept an increasingly busy touring schedule, playing gigs around the world.

Dayton — with his custom King guitar built by Jason Burns at Blast Cult — and Fish with her trusty Gibson SG

But toward the end of '21, after touring behind *Faster* for a few months, Fish realized she was ready for a new challenge — or at least a new "old" challenge; for well over a decade, she'd wanted to collaborate on a project with another guitar player. In fact, she hadn't really worked with another guitarist since the *Girls with Guitars* albums she recorded with Cassie Taylor, Dani Wilde and Victoria Smith back in 2011 and 2012.

Enter Jesse Dayton.

Dayton, a Texas native, has been recording quality albums and making the rockabilly rounds since the mid Nineties. He's found success mining East Texas/Louisiana-inspired blues, outlaw country and punk rock. In addition to performing as a solo artist, he's played with Social Distortion, the Supersuckers, George Strait, Ryan Bingham and X — and recorded with Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, Glen Campbell and Willie Nelson, among scores of others.

Fish first heard of Dayton while she was getting her start in Kansas City in the early 2000s; she even opened for him several times at local venues. Since then, they've kept tabs on each other's careers — and it hit her after catching one of Dayton's shows in January 2022: Dayton would be the perfect collaborator. Obviously — since you're reading this story right now — Dayton was more than willing.

LAY IT DOWN

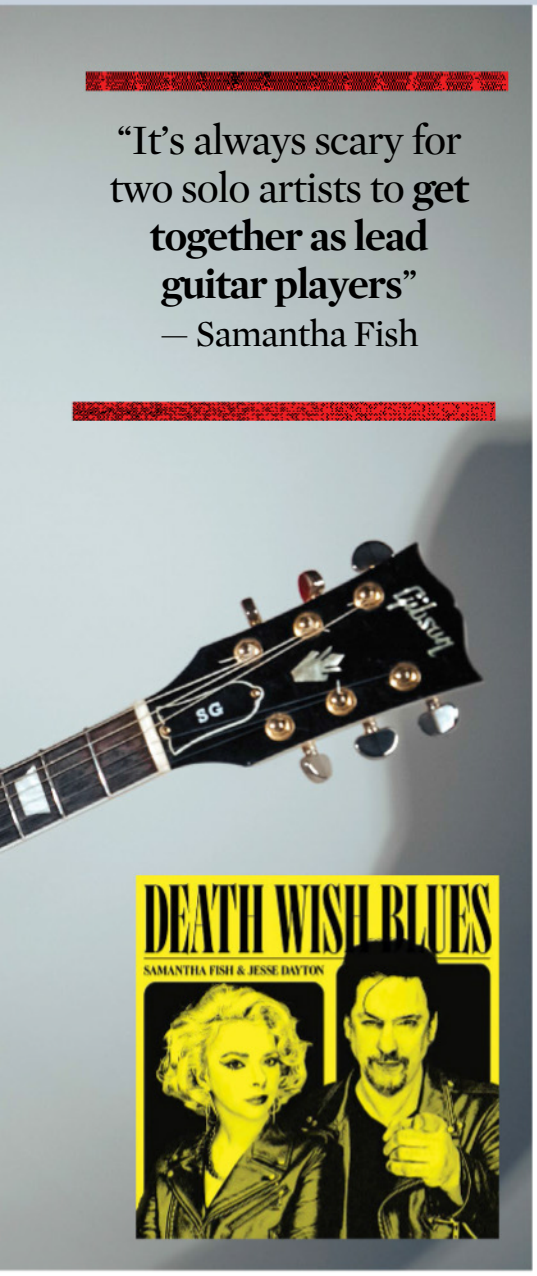
FISH'S MANAGER, RUEBEN Williams, an old friend of Dayton's, arranged recording time at a studio in New Orleans in May 2022 with Williams producing. After some lengthy conversations, and realizing they dug many of the same songs and artists, they recorded three songs — all covers — for 2022's *The Stardust Sessions* EP.

"Once we started collaborating and writing, I found we really had a lot in common," Fish says. "That was a preliminary exercise to see how we sound singing together. It was very 'bootleg' in a way. It's got a rough, urgent, raw feeling to it."

The Clash's **"Brand New Cadillac"** (which was already a cover; it was written in the late Fifties by Vince Taylor) allowed them to explore some riff-fueled I-IV-V punkabilly — while Magic Sam's **"Feelin' Good"** let them dig into their bluesier side. They chose Townes Van Zandt's **"I'll Be Here in the Morning"** as the EP's closer because it showed they could also "take it to a delicate place."

The session went so well that they started co-writing new songs, with longtime Fish collaborator Jim McCormick also contributing. "I'd send her melodies," Dayton says. "It was

> "It's always scary for two solo artists to **get together as lead guitar players**" — Samantha Fish



HORIZON SOUTH MEDIA

just kind of non-stop. We always had something we were working on."

Ultimately, they wrote about 15 or 16 songs, more than enough for the album that would become their full-length debut, *Death Wish Blues*. In late summer 2022, they picked 12 of those tracks to record in Woodstock, New York, with the help of producer and veteran musician Jon Spencer, best known for his work with the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion.

THE WAY WE ARE

FOR FISH, *DEATH* *Wish Blues* represents a true "duets" album, a project where both artists are given equal opportunity to shine. Spencer was able to help immensely in that regard. "Jon Spencer is an expert on how to sonically separate the instruments," Fish says. "He put us on different amplifiers to help us separate our tones. We were experimenting with different setups, using everything we could to make sure there was sonic separation and unique voices all over the album." Dayton adds that listeners will get to hear what it's "*really* like to hear guitars played live in the studio; listeners are going to hear that energy."

The album's title illustrates the duo's goal for the album — modern blues with an edge. "We wanted to make something that was rooted in the blues world," Fish says. "Jon Spencer is a blues artist, but he's also a punk rock artist and a rock 'n' roll guy. He's got so many layers. We picked that title because we *all* have so many layers, and we're pushing the envelope and pushing the edge. We really wanted to bring this back to what our focus point was. We wanted to make a blues record out of this."

LO-FI LOVER

GEAR-WISE, FISH mainly stuck with her white Gibson SG because of its versatility. "It needs to rock, but it also plays delicate parts that are more subdued," she says. She also used her Stogie Box Blues cigar box guitar on **"Rippin' and Runnin',"** which allowed her to create different textures when paired with Dayton's acoustic guitar. "It's a combo I've never used on an album," she says. "But it gave such a unique perspective back to the cigar box. It's a very powerful-sounding instrument, but the way we had it amped and mic'd, it really complimented the acoustic; it has a very cool dark texture against something like an acoustic, which is light, springy and vibrant."

Dayton used a prototype King hollowbody electric — with TV Jones pickups and a Bigsby — built by Jason Burns at Blast Cult in London. The guitar can be heard throughout the album, usually through an array of vintage amplifiers, mostly Sixties and Seventies Fenders.

Speaking of which, Fish says having a limitless variety of amps at their disposal led to some major surprises. She never thought in a million years that she'd play some of the amps they were working with. For example, on **"Trauma,"** she played a solo through a custom solid-state amp. It was new territory for Fish, but Spencer reminded her to trust the process, giving her the confidence to achieve the sound she wanted.

"It sounds like a dagger cutting through the tape, you know?" she says. "What I wanted was for it to cut through and sound like a rocket ship in the middle of the solo. I think I've always sort of steered away from solid-state amps and all that because I grew up playing tubes. But [*we*] just [*did*] whatever it took to get us to a vast sonic palette. It wasn't so pedal focused — it was more about amp experimentation." Oddly enough, that experimentation even found her playing through an old Woodstock Elementary School PA speaker.

One of Dayton's favorite guitar moments happened on the title track (and first single/music video), **"Deathwish."** "We were trying to get the amps to that very elusive place that I think all rock guitar players — the ones with a sense of history — look for," he says. "It's this place where it breaks up and it distorts, but it's not too crazy. On a lot of my favorite records, whether it's the [*Rolling*] Stones or Buddy Guy, you can hear where it's almost on the verge of being too distorted, but it's just breaking up. I live for that place!"

MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

"I'M SURPRISED AT how we're able to push each other — and I think it's just because we love to listen to one another," Dayton says about the sonic success of the pairing. "There are people who have been in bands for years and years, and they don't really listen to what each other's playing. You might think they do, but they're just like, 'Okay, this is where I come in.' But I think we're both each other's biggest fans... There's a lot of people who can shred on the guitar, play a lot of notes, but they don't really say much. Sam has a lyrical, melodic way that she starts — almost like a horn player — her leads. And her voice is just out of this world; she's got this incredible gospel/soul range."

"It's always scary for two solo artists to get together as lead guitar players," Fish adds. "It's quite an undertaking to figure out how to weave in and out of each other, how to be supportive, how to make room and also find a texture or a sonic area that can be supportive. Jesse's got great tone, great ears, a great sense of dynamics and control. He also had a different education on the guitar than I did, and that lends itself to our own voices. We're just two separate instrumentalists, and the task is to find ways to complement each other, get our points across and build something dynamic and melodic."

"We had to keep open minds in order to do this," Dayton says. "A lot of it has to do with how much respect we have for each other. We leave places for each other to play. And plus, we really enjoy listening to each other. Playing with another guitar player is like having a conversation. I could just sit back and listen to Sam. I could just sit back and play some funky little rhythm part that kind of supports what she's playing because I enjoy listening to her. And I would think the same goes for her with me."

LIKE A CLASSIC

THERE'S AN "URGENCY" to *Death Wish Blues* — and the pair's live shows — that will excite fans of both guitarists, Fish says. "I've always thought my shows were energetic, but we're playing some of the stuff at breakneck speed. It's a really exciting rock show. We break it down for certain moments, but the whole show just kind of goes up and up and up and up and up. It's kind of like the roller coaster going up the first crest." GW

Death Wish Blues is out May 19.

Ibanez

LONG LIVE ROCK 'N' ROLL

PAUL GILBERT takes us on a deep dive through his latest album — a 12-track celebration of metal great **Ronnie James Dio**, who roped in guitar greats **Tony Iommi, Ritchie Blackmore** and **Vivian Campbell** across various eras of his storied career

BY Amit Sharma PHOTOS BY Sam Gehrke

PAGE 53 GW

PAUL GILBERT IS a man who needs little introduction to these pages. As the founding guitar player in Racer X, he was responsible for taking heavy metal to new virtuosic heights on mid-Eighties records *Street Lethal* and *Second Heat*, with more finger-twisting escapades explored on the albums that followed more than a decade later. Even on those early releases, when Gilbert was barely out of his teens, it was like he'd arrived fully formed with breathtaking dexterity and control, especially when it came to synchronizing both hands and alternate picking with effortless precision.

His other main band, Mr. Big, was — and still is — an infinitely more melodic affair: perhaps best known for multiple chart-topping early Nineties hit "To Be with You," as well as other choice offerings like "Green Tinted Sixties Mind," "Colorado Bulldog" and "Take Cover." Then, of course, there are the REH instructional videos such as *Intense Rock*, *Intense Rock II* and *Terrifying Guitar Trip*, which have become widely regarded as shredders' bibles, with Gilbert breaking down his signature licks and moves while injecting his own unique sense of humor to make the footage more engaging and less stuffy, as many tapes of that era often were.

But where do you go when you've been long established as one of the most technically gifted and creatively ambitious guitar players in the world? In Gilbert's case, his solo releases over the last decade or so have been rooted more in earthy blues, working with less gain using Marshall combos in place of the Laney half-stacks of the past, and in recent years, he's been expanding into the world of slide guitar. His latest release, simply titled *The Dio Album*, witnesses him reigniting his passion for heavy metal through the hits that soundtracked his youth, from Ronnie James Dio's thunderous anthems fronting Black Sabbath to other famous works recorded with Rainbow and his solo band.

The idea came to Gilbert by pure chance — he was driving in his car and saw someone wearing a black baseball cap with three large letters printed in a red gothic font. It set off a chain of ideas and inspiration that led to the 12 tracks heard on his latest release, reimagined as instrumentals where his fingers — or slide — do all the talking.

"Seeing that Dio hat was a little ray of sunshine amongst the darkness!" says Gilbert from the comfort of his home studio, where he's surrounded by vintage Ibanez guitars as well as an array of colorful pedals and amps. "You see some interesting things when you go outside in Portland. It seems to be getting better, but a couple of years ago, you'd see the bumper stickers and people loudly expressing stuff that they'd be better off keeping to themselves! Heading out for a drive and seeing all of those messages would be an *intense* experience. But that Dio hat cheered me up so much."

What was it about Ronnie James Dio's vocal lines that made you think it'd be a good idea to recreate them on guitar?

I've been trying to become a more melodic guitar player for years now. I have a to-do list — stuff like pay the bills, fix the broken whatever — and on that list is also a list of singers I want to copy in order to improve my grasp of melodic language. When I made that list, Dio was at the very top with the song "Long Live Rock 'n' Roll." For some of the vocal melodies, you're essentially working with three notes; that's what it's built out of, though there's a little more to it than that. If you play those three notes really square, it can sound pretty lifeless. It reminded me of being a kid, watching the TV and seeing some guy in a suit reciting lyrics like "A-wop-bop-a-loo-mop-a-lop-bam-boom" or "Tutti frutti, oh rutti." They were trying to show how ridiculous rock 'n' roll was by taking the elements of expression away, showcasing it with nothing left. I would be thinking, "You missed all the cool stuff!" I kept that in mind with these vocal lines — at its core it might just be three simple notes, but it's all the expression around them that make it powerful.

There's a lot to be said for phrasing and feel, yet they are such abstract and subjective terms.

When I'm teaching, it's my job to try and help students understand what feel actually is. It's not helpful to say, "Play with more feel" because that doesn't mean anything. You have to break down the elements. Through teaching I've made a checklist of things to pay attention to, and I've also learned a lot from that myself. One of the best things you can do is learn a vocal line. You realize you might have to slide into one note or use a special kind of vibrato. And there's not just *one* kind of vibrato. Does it start with nothing and gradually speed up? Or is it really fast right away? Is it vibrato that only goes sharp, like at the top of a bend? Or is it something that sounds more like a slide? There are all these little decisions. The more you do them, the quicker those instincts come naturally. I didn't want to spoil this album by putting myself into it. I wanted to take Ronnie's style and instill as much of that as humanly possible within me. On other records I'll play more like me, but not this one. It was about listening and learning from Ronnie, as well as Tony, Ritchie and Vivian.

Speaking of whom, you explored the riffs and leads of three very different-sounding metal guitar heroes on this album. What did you learn from covering their parts?

The most challenging part was the first solo from "Neon Knights" because that's a weird chord progression. It's a heavy metal song that suddenly goes all major. Funnily enough it was never one of my favorite solos. As a listener I'd always be like, "What's going on *here*?" because it felt like a real departure. When I played it, I thought I'd just improvise and come up with my own thing that kept with the spirit of Tony's lead. And I listened back thinking, "No, I don't like what I've done." I had to follow Tony more closely because what he did was better. And I kept having to go back, because whatever I did, Tony would be better. In the end, it still wasn't exactly the same but it was a lot more like the original. I couldn't improve on it. Even though it's over major sevenths, almost like jazz chords, I had to use a lot of physical force and hit hard for the performance. That song had more takes than anything else on the record.

How many was it by the end?

I would say I did around 100 takes before I got something I was happy with. I love it now, but it was definitely a process. I actually sent the engineer home, pretending I was happy and then carried on after he'd left. The next day I sent him the file and said, "Can you fly that in?" and explained I didn't want to make anyone sit there while I played the same solo 100 times. I really did love doing it, though. That's the nice thing of having your own studio. You can just sit there until you get it right. The solo in "Kill the King" was the opposite. We just went with the first take. I'm glad the tape was rolling. Even though we did a couple more, I knew there was no way I'd top that first run. There was one line I'd been practicing a lot in the days before recording, this crazy octave jumping thing.

"It's funny, because I have a good portion of metal fans, a lot of them would write comments like, 'Dude, why aren't you using 24 frets?'" Paul Gilbert says

"I had to follow Tony Iommi more closely because what he did was better. I kept having to go back, because whatever I did, Tony would be better"

Ronnie James Dio [*left*] and Tony Iommi perform at a U.K. Black Sabbath show in 1992

[*facing page*] Rainbow's Dio [*left*] and Ritchie Blackmore in Los Angeles in June 1975

While there are moments of "Stand Up and Shout" and "Don't Talk to Strangers" that showcase some of your classic licks, like you said, for the most part you were guided by the players on the original recordings.

I didn't want to break the spell. I grew up with these songs, so it's all about sticking with the spirit of them. If I started doing some lick that was out of character it would distract the listener from being in that place. It was more about the emotion, the spell and the groove than me going, "I gotta do my lick!" in whatever track. That's the nice thing about having done a lot of records. I've had plenty of opportunities to "do the lick," and because of that, I'm not always panicking to squeeze it in. It's all about being musical.

There's some tremolo-picked single notes on "Kill the King," as well as sparing usage of the harmonic minor scale for the turnarounds.

It's nice to give the fretting hand a little break every now and then. And with the harmonic minor runs, I was just trying to go with the chords. Whenever I get to the five, I know it's time to add that major seventh into my natural minor ideas, and you get that Blackmore or Yngwie kind of flavor. That's where the chords go, so why not?

It definitely feels like Tony Iommi and Ritchie Blackmore have more in common out of the three guitar players.

Yeah! Though when it came to the Vivian Campbell stuff, he had that Gary Moore lick *down*. It's like a major seven thing but it's used more like a minor nine. It's two notes per string... and I've never been good at that. I've seen Gary doing it, Vivian doing it, Michael Angelo Batio doing it, but I don't have that in my toolbox. I really wanted to get the notes, though, in order to play the lick. So I figured out a way to use this horrible stretch with three notes per string and then one note at the very top. It's the exact same pattern, but the architecture of it is different. As long as I can get the stretch, I can do stuff like that all day long. The exact character isn't quite the same because of where the pick falls, but at least I could play it clean and up to speed. I had a fighting chance doing it like that, the other way... well, I'd have to hire a studio musician. I just can't play like that!

Let's talk about the main instruments on these recordings. What are we hearing?

The main guitar was a blue 1983 Ibanez Roadstar II, which I bought on Reverb. I had it refretted because the frets weren't big, and I had the knobs moved around because I like my volume knob further down. And the whammy on that guitar is a really good-sounding whammy. It has a lot of sustain. One thing that took getting used to was the radius. It was really small, meaning there was a lot of curve. It wasn't flat like a lot of modern Ibanez guitars. I thought after it had been re-fretted it would be wonderful to play, but the action needed to be high to do those Jimmy Page-style step-and-a-half bends. It was so high I was actually worried I wouldn't be able to play the guitar... and I actually keep my action pretty high anyway. But because of the sustain and tone it was perfect for all the vocal stuff, especially as it has only 21 frets, which gave me more access to pick harmonics.

It's like picking up an old Strat; guitars respond differently with fewer frets.

It's funny, because I have a good portion of metal fans, a lot of them would write comments like, "Dude, why aren't you using 24 frets?" Of course, more frets means you have access to higher notes, but in a way, you can actually get higher notes with a 21-fret guitar because there are more pick harmonics you can squeeze out with your thumb and the side of your pick. That's how I ended up shaping notes to sound like vowels. When you're copying a singer, you're trying to make your guitar sound like lyrics: There are "eehs" and "aahs" and "oohs." For some reason, fewer frets means you can find these harmonics much easier.

What was next in the signal chain?

I used my signature JHS PG-14 distortion for a lot of the rhythms, it worked really well for the Iommi stuff like "Heaven and Hell." For

MICK HUTSON/REDFERNS (IOMMI) FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS (BLACKMORE)

the leads, I'd often plug into my Fender Vibrolux Reverb. I actually blew up the speakers, so I took a saw and made it into a head. I used it for a fair amount of the vocal stuff because it had this honky midrange that worked nicely. There was also my Marshall JTM45 running clean with a combination of pedals running into it, like a Supro overdrive. The JHS stuff is nice because it's all subtly different.

Which ended up being your favorites?

There's a [*Silvertone 1484 replica*] pedal they make called the [*Jackson Audio 1484*] Twin Twelve that worked really nicely as a treble booster. The Supro was more woolly and more like a Sixties fuzz; it didn't have the sharp attack that I might want. But with the Twin Twelve before it, that turned out to be a very nice combination, bringing out all the haunting mids. Sometimes I wouldn't really know what I was doing; I'd just grab stuff and keep swapping until it felt like it was flowing. There was a lot of hit-and-miss playfulness. I'd look around, see what I can find in the closet and keep going until I found something right. I don't really tend to know the answer until I find out, which is why it's nice to have a pedal collection!

There are also some rather lavish organ sounds, particularly for the Rainbow stuff.

A lot of Rainbow recordings have a B3, so for "Kill the King" I really wanted to have that. Reproducing the organ parts on guitar is something I found really satisfying. I ended up using a Neo Instruments Mini VENT II for those Leslie sounds. I'd do this Billy Gibbons kinda thing, where you have two strings fretted to make a chord, but with only one of the notes plucked with your finger — allowing the other note to only come through in the holes.

> "On other records I'll play more like me, **but not this one**"

It's that classic blues lick you hear in [*ZZ Top's*] "La Grange" and stuff like that. With that pedal and that technique it sounded perfect! I couldn't believe what was coming out of my amp. It genuinely sounded like a B3 doing a trill. Oh, and on "Don't Talk to Strangers," Dio whispers at one point. I sat there wondering how the hell I'd get that. I dug out my Cry Baby and put a couple of distortions behind it so it would hiss, and got my wah to "whisper" that part!" [*Laughs*]

You also picked up your slide for certain lines. How did you go about choosing which ones?

I used my slide at points but not everywhere. I found for the verses I would use standard fingers, and for the bridge sections, I'd reach for the slide. For some reason, that seemed to work out really well. If there's too much slide, you get tired of listening to it. So it was the bridges in songs like "Holy Diver" where Ronnie sings "Between the velvet lies!" But for a lot of the other parts I was just using my fingers. Though, funnily enough, sometimes I would be playing and using my finger like a slide; I'd be attacking notes horizontally to get the right kind of phrasing. I'm thankful for those calluses.

Slide still feels like relatively new territory for you. What have been your biggest learning curves in mastering the artform?

I don't think I'm that great at slide, but I do know what I want to achieve when I'm holding one. Usually I'm playing single notes and trying to copy a singer. Because there are some slide players out there who are more chordal, and they tend to use open tunings, which sounds great because you don't need a lot of distortion. You can get an acoustic guitar to jangle really nicely like that. I haven't pursued that style myself. I'm just trying to copy my favorite singers like Dio. Initially when I started, I was trying to copy my existing playing. I've always been quite a scale-y player, so I'd take a lick like the one from my tuitionals — like the well-known one with three notes on one string, an upstroke on a higher string and then back down — and try to achieve that with the slide. It sounded horrible! You can't really get stuff like that to sound good. I ended up thinking to myself, "Why am I doing this?"

So how'd you go about refining your approach?

The first time I started to have success with slide was when I tried copying "Mercedes Benz" by Janis Joplin. That vocal line is not a scale-y thing. It's more like triads with a lot of slides between. Things like that helped me relearn the fretboard, because I was so used to hitting every rung on the ladder. I wasn't used to these massive jumps where you wouldn't hit the note on the head — you'd have to slide into them. The guitar became this whole new thing to me. So if you want to get better at slide, first figure out which finger you like best. For me, it's the second finger because it has the biggest reach, and then maybe learn the licks from "One Way Out" by the Allman Brothers Band or pick at your favorite vocal lines. "Blackbird" by the Beatles was a really challenging one, especially that last line, "Into the light of the dark black night." You really have to make these quick, short and accurate jumps.

Was there a breakthrough moment where you realized, "Okay, I've got this!"?

I auditioned drummers some years ago and brought a little digital recording device along. When I listened back I remember thinking, "Who's that other guy on guitar?" It sounded like another player had entered the room. A few moments later I realized it was me. Now that felt *really* exciting — adding something into my playing that felt like such a different voice to anything I'd done before. I guess we try to get that with pedals and gear, hoping to expand our sound and make our licks sound more beautiful or whatever. But this was way better than any pedal. It was a completely different sound and one that I really liked. I didn't need it all the time. I didn't want to lose the old me and I didn't have to. I could pick up a slide and put it down when I'm done. It's nice to be able to have a conversation with myself like that. GW

A BAND FOR ALL SEASONS

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WORDS BY
AMIT SHARMA

PHOTOS BY
TIM SACCENTI

METALLICA
KSR

"THE ONLY THING WE ASKED EACH OTHER AT THE VERY BEGINNING WAS, 'DO YOU HAVE ANY COOL NWOBHM RIFFS?'"

METALLICA ARE WELL AND TRULY BACK.

A lot has changed with the world in the seven years since *Hardwired... to Self-Destruct*, though thankfully there are some things you can always count on. From James Hetfield's furious downpicking and Lars Ulrich's thunderous grooves to Kirk Hammett's wailing leads and Robert Trujillo's earth-conquering bass, Metallica's latest studio album, *72 Seasons*, is as reassuring as it gets, offering everything you could possibly want from a modern Metallica record — and perhaps even standing as their finest release since 1991's *Metallica*, aka the Black Album.

A lot of it will feel familiar in the way many fans will have hoped, though it's the creative surprises and unexpected detours that make album number 11 such a standout, cross-pollinating ideas and splicing riffs in ways few could have ever guessed. For a band who have been accused of being perhaps a little too predictable at times — which, let's not forget, is natural after four decades of game-changing and trend-setting music — this is the sound of Metallica showing us they're the masters of their own destiny.

Our first taste arrived late last year in the form of "Lux Æterna," the lead single on which the quartet sounded fiercely re-energized and reinvigorated in ways that harked back to the earliest recordings committed to tape not long after their teens. Its successor, "Screaming Suicide," which arrived two months later, was a more bluesy affair that nodded to the early metal bands that helped ignite the fuse for the thrash movement, from Judas Priest and Diamond Head to Iron Maiden. And then in March they unveiled brooding epic "If Darkness Had a Son" — a neck-thickening display of mid-tempo triplets on the low E string, palm-muted chromatic ideas that creep and crawl their way around the lower frets and turbo-charged blues licks that scream over smoldering rhythms. Speaking to *Guitar World* a few months ahead of the album's release, Kirk Hammett explains why Metallica are sounding more pissed off, defiant and inventive than they have in a long time.

"A lot of creativity came from being angry from with general fuckin' state of the world," he says, calling from his home in Hawaii. "All that stuff definitely worked its way into the music. I think this album would have sounded a lot different if we didn't have the pandemic. I don't know exactly how, but I guarantee it would have sounded different. People sometimes say, 'Oh yeah, Metallica, they're getting older, they're losing their way, their lifestyles are overtaking them' or whatever! You know, it's really easy to say all that stuff. But a person is not completely what they are in that single moment..."

He pauses for a moment, before hitting the nail on the head.

"That 18-year-old Kirk is *still* in me," he says. "The 25-year-old Kirk is still in me. The 45-year-old Kirk is still in me, same as the 55-year-old me. I'm 60 now, but I feel like I can access any of those ages pretty easily, and even other versions that haven't even appeared yet. Most people, if they think about it, could do the same. It's not hard. To sum up that energy or feeling from the past is really not that difficult for us. People might think it's like scaling a mountain... uh, it's not! [*Laughs*] There's a lot that goes into the music that isn't even musical. A lot of it is pure creativity, intention and consciousness. That's what I believe. And if this all sounds like a bunch of fuckin' crockery, I don't really care... this is where my mind is at right now.

"To sum up that energy or feeling from the past is really not that difficult for us," Kirk Hammett says. "People might think it's like scaling a mountain... uh, it's not!"

There's been a lot of speculation over the guitar on the *72 Seasons* album cover [*See page 62*]. Is it a Fernandes LE-1 like the one you owned early on?

It was some $200 guitar, which I admit doesn't really answer your question. [*Laughs*] The photographer who took the picture isn't a guitar player. He just said it was some cheap instrument he found and then burned. I asked, "Do you remember what the word was on the headstock?" and he said, "Oh, no!" If people have identified it as a Fernandes, that's great, because I'd actually like to know too! People like you ask me these sorts of questions, so I need to have a decent answer for them. But it wasn't meant to be any sort of statement or anything. There's no fuckin' conspiracy or whatever. It's plainly and *only* a burnt guitar that ended up being part of the artistic concept for the album... that's it.

Well, you know what Metallica fans and guitar players are like — always looking to connect the dots. People love coming up with their own theories.

I'm guilty of all that kind of stuff myself, especially when it comes to my favorite guitar players. So I really understand. [*Laughs*] For a long time I couldn't figure out what string gauges Jimi Hendrix used until [*producer*] Bob Rock found out and sent that information over to me. It was a mixture of two or three sets that they made back in the day.

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

ESP launches long-awaited Kirk Hammett LTD KH-V signature models

LAST SUMMER, ESP made waves at NAMM by giving guitar fans a glimpse of an upcoming LTD Kirk Hammett signature guitar — the KH-V, which was inspired by the Metallica maestro's exclusive custom shop ESP V electric guitar. Nine months after confirming the six-string was in the works, ESP has officially introduced three KH-V models, which have arrived in Black Sparkle, Red Sparkle and Metallic Gold colorways.

As many noted back in June last year, these three uniquely finished LTD KH-Vs are based on a trio of

Don't get any clever thoughts about secret messages on the *72 Seasons* album cover, Hammett says: "There's no conspiracy or whatever. It's plainly and only a burnt guitar that ended up being part of the artistic concept for the album... that's it!"

And when I found out, I felt like a geek, you know? I remember replying to Bob saying, "This is really great, bro!" Then I asked Bob if he'd noticed how Hendrix would barre parts of certain chords with his pinky instead of his ring finger, and he wasn't aware of that. I'd realized it from watching videos of him, thinking it looked unusual. And here's the funny thing — if you try doing it like that, it actually sounds different. I'm just as guilty of collecting the same geeky and nerdy info that exists out there.

This new album has a lot of unexpected moments in terms of key changes and the general flow of ideas. Was that a conscious decision?

It's like this: the music just *appears*. It comes in short little pinches. Then we all get together and certain pieces get chopped together. It's like magnetism. If there are any gaps, we'll sit there and fill them up. Usually the stuff that appears in those gaps comes spontaneously. This time, the initial riffs that showed up were kinda angry, frustrated and angsty. The stuff in between just came out of us when we got in a room and started playing. Because of the chemistry we have, music appears without any of us really thinking about it. And we'll be like, "Wow, this is a cool part that belongs on the album." I guess it comes from the universe or god — I don't know, wherever... it's

"THE 'METALLICA SCALE' WOULD INCLUDE A MINOR THIRD, A FLAT FIVE AND A MINOR SIXTH AND MINOR SEVENTH"

just inspiration.

Interestingly, there's no ballad on this one.

Yeah, a ballad didn't show up. Whenever I sat down to write stuff, it would just be heavy riffs. Nothing really sensitive or beautiful ever came to mind for this album; it just didn't. The same went for James, Rob and Lars. None of us were thinking about ballady stuff. There are hints here and there but nothing major. When we make an album, we're not really sure what it's going to be. We have these riffs, there's a certain sort of energy and once the first songs start building, we get an idea of how the album is shaping up. Then we jump on that energy and write more songs that are like-minded. The only thing we asked each other at the very beginning was, "Do you have any cool NWOBHM riffs?" I think that's the only thing we mentioned. [*Laughs*] And there's a lot of NWOBHM-type stuff on this album. I think it's because that fuckin' music is just *in* us. When you come out of your first 72 seasons [*18 years*], your mind is like a sponge. When I was in my 72nd season, I was discovering the NWOBHM with my friend John Marshall. My 73rd season was more of the same — and then it stuck with me this entire time.

You and your bandmates are well known for being

ESP custom shop models that Hammett had built in 2019 — dubbed the ESP USA V-1 — and look to be near-enough like-for-like recreations of those high-end instruments. Aesthetics aside — each finish matches up to an ESP custom shop counterpart — the LTD KH-V nods to Hammett's ESP USA V-1 with its slightly offset V body, which is similar to that of the standard-run ESP USA V-II. Build-wise, the 25.5" scale LTD KH-V is confirmed to have a korina body and three-piece extra-thin U-shaped maple neck, as well as a Macassar ebony fingerboard that's adorned with 24 extra-jumbo frets.

Flashing a neck-thru-body construction, the guitar also comes fitted with a TonePros bridge and LTD locking tuners, with a set of Hammett's signature EMG Bone Breaker pickups lining up alongside volume and tone knobs, and a three-way selector switch. Other notable appointments include color-matched headstocks and shark tooth-style inlays — all of which could be found on Hammett's flagship ESP custom shop V. In fact, aside from the LTD logo on the headstock, these look to be identical visual replicas of those ultra-boutique models.

"I actually got goosebumps when I saw the KH-V for the first time," Hammett says. "It was like the perfect hybrid of reality and my vision. It's such a beautiful guitar. I strapped it on and played it later that day; just jamming out with friends for four or five hours. It's an amazing, amazing guitar."

The KH-V has been available since late March (with a deluxe ESP hardshell case included).

— Matt Owen

Anglophiles, after all.
I just love what the U.K. has given to the world of electric guitar playing. Just huge, huge contributions from the Sixties onwards. And I think it was three guys who spearheaded all of that — Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton and Jimmy Page. They threw down the gauntlet for all of us to take from. I have a lot of gratitude for all that culture, especially when it comes to electric guitar playing and music in general. I truly love that stuff.

On this album you co-wrote four of the tracks. Clearly, you didn't lose your hard drive this time around!
Yeah! [*Laughs*] That happened back in 2013 or 2014, almost 10 years ago now. I've had a lot of time to replenish the riff bank. So I sat on a lot of music. I always have a lot of music... until I lose my phone! [*Laughs*] Since then, I've learned to back up all my ideas. There comes a time where we say, "Okay, we're creating the riff bank; everyone put their investments into the riff account." We all do that and then we start picking out different ideas, asking ourselves, "Is this a good basis for a song?" We just work from there. It's never a case of being like, "Oh, this is Rob's riff or Lars' idea." We don't really do that. We see the music as just music, without any identities or egos attached to it. I think it's important to do it like that. Egos just get in the way and cloud your ability to feel and see things fully. Egos weigh you *down*. I think we've instinctively known that from the very beginning. It is what it is. In this band, when all the songs are finished, it can be pretty difficult figuring out which songs are yours or someone else's.

That's actually quite funny.
We just forget! We'll be like, "That's my riff... oh wait, is that my riff or someone else's that I've played so much I now think it's mine?!" Stuff like that is not a concern during the creative process. It's something we work out once all the smoke clears and we're done with them. Only then will I sit back and think. "Oh yeah, I made some contributions on this album, that's nice!" For me, it's not the beginning and the end of my vindication in this band. It doesn't come down to personal contribution, you know?

You and James will go down as one of the greatest tag teams in guitar history. What's the secret to that chemistry?
We rely on each other a lot. I lean on him to put down the most solid rhythms, and he relies on me to play all the complicated guitar parts and solos. It's a very functional relationship in that regard. Our roles are pretty firmly defined in this band... it just *works*. All that aside, from a pure technique perspective, James is the most natural guitar player out there. He doesn't even have to practice. He can just pick up a guitar and play 32-second low-E notes really fast. He's the best at that. Then he can add a staccato rhythm so easily; he goes into these percussive modes where he treats his guitar like a drum kit. All of a sudden these riffs start flying out. It's a real wonder to watch, and if you're not used to seeing it, it's a bit intimidating. Luckily I'm used to seeing it. And it can be hard to keep up with his natural instinct as a guitarist because it is *so* powerful.

While your natural inclination is to color in between the lines, so to speak.
Yeah, I'm all about improvisation — to the point where I don't like playing the recorded solos anywhere, even with the old stuff. They don't even feel like solos, they feel like parts. I want to be in the moment and improvise, coming up with things I've never played before. That's my role! We lean on each other to fulfill these roles and when they come together they mesh beautifully. It's like a lattice or crochet or interweaved links or chainmail. It just works. Whenever we get together it's always seamless. And it's been like that ever since I started playing with him back in 1983 in the Music Building... it's crazy. The most jarring thing when I joined was that I actually felt more at home in Metallica than I did in my old band, Exodus. And it's because I connected with James and Lars instantly, in about .7 seconds. That's just how it is with us. Another thing is that James and I love two-guitar bands. Our passion for Thin Lizzy runs so deep. We love Lynyrd Skynyrd, Judas Priest, Iron Maiden... these kinds of bands really mean a lot to us. We're upholding that tradition, which is very NWOBHM.

The tones on this album are truly ferocious. What can you tell us about the guitars we're hearing?
I used Greeny and my ESP Mummy guitar for everything, going back and forth between the two. I'd use the Mummy when I needed a whammy bar or was doing crazy stuff, and then I used Greeny for everything else. I love Greeny the most out of all my guitars. Over the last eight or nine years I've *bound* myself to that guitar, probably in the same way Peter Green did and Gary Moore did. That guitar just becomes a part of you. You just want to play it all the time. I wish the guitar could speak — it *can* speak — but I wish it could speak an actual language because I know it has so many stories after experiencing so much.

And what were you plugging into?
As far as amps are concerned, we started off with my live rhythm and lead sounds which are modeled by a Fractal. Those tones came from a modded late-Seventies Marshall that I have and my Randall/Fortin Meathead, as well as a Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifier. Those amps were blended to get my rhythm sound and tweaked further to get my lead tones. That was our starting point because it was all so well dialed in for our live tones. We started with those sounds and carried on tweaking until we got to what you hear on the album. For my leads, I had my Fractal setting with a Tube Screamer in front, as well as the Solo Dallas Replica Ex Tower. It's like what Angus Young used on *Back in Black* to get that amazing sound. He would push his Samson wireless receiver output in a way that would further distort his tone. What the Tower does is the same thing but without using a wireless unit. So I used that for a lot of different things. It adds this unique sort of compression you can't really get anywhere else. As well as the compression, it adds this kind of harmonic distortion that just makes everything sound explosive and very touch-sensitive when using PAF-style pickups. That was my sound. I pretty much went to town with just that, plus my signature wah [*Dunlop KH95 Cry Baby*].

Speaking of wah pedals, you are associated with them arguably more than any other player who has ever existed. The large majority of your leads have come via a Cry Baby, shaping each note you play almost like a vowel.
You hit the nail right on the head. It gives a vocal quality to the notes. The wah enables me to mirror the inner voice in my head and in my heart. That's what I'm hearing. All these manipulated notes and tones, because that's what the human voice is like. We cycle through all these different tones and frequencies when we speak. When I step on that wah pedal and hear that click... well, I'm hearing that clicking in my brain and in my heart at the same time. I don't care what anyone fuckin' says. If I feel like stepping on the wah pedal, I step on the fuckin' wah pedal, because it brings me closer to what I'm hearing internally. And that's the whole point of gear — to help bring the thing you hear internally out into the external world. Yeah, Jimi Hendrix is probably number two. I can't think of anybody who uses the wah pedal as much as I do." [*Laughs*]

There's nothing wrong with that, if

METALLICA
"FROM A PURE TECHNIQUE PERSPECTIVE, JAMES IS THE MOST NATURAL GUITAR PLAYER OUT THERE"

it makes you happy!
I'm not ashamed of it. I love it so much. I'll use it for the next fuckin' 20 years. I don't care what people say. *Nothing* can stop me. You'll have to stop my inner voice to stop me from using that wah pedal! That's what I love about music. People can do whatever the fuck they want under the guise of self-expression. The results are always interesting that way. Take a musician like Frank Zappa. He did whatever the fuck he wanted to and the results were beautiful... so that's all I have to say about that.

What can you tell us about James' rig on this album?
James came up to me recently and said, "You have this one Marshall that you always go back to and it sounds *great;* I don't have one like that so I need to find one I'm really into." He has a lot of Marshall amps, but he hasn't been using them for a long time. He went back to them to figure out which ones were good and started using them again. He had this Jose Arredondo-modded Marshall; that's the guy who modded Eddie Van Halen's Marshalls. I think James rediscovered his Marshall collection on this album, though he still used all kinds of different amps. He likes the Diezel VH4, he likes the Bogner Uberschall, he likes some Blackstar stuff. We actually have different tastes when it comes to amps, but it's to get a similar kind of sound. I love the sound of tubes and valves. He loves low-ended, full-on crunch. We brought a whole bunch of Marshalls back into the studio and I used them too.

Was there a specific approach to the leads this time round? Did you map everything out or just go for it?
I have to be honest, for this album, all of the solos were improvised. I didn't work anything out purposefully. I see these solos as place markers for when I play live. My plan is to improvise the shit out of these solos, because I don't really remember what I played in the studio. That's the way I want it. When I'm on stage and it comes time to do a solo for these new songs, I want to play whatever the fuck I want to... much in the same spirit as what Ritchie Blackmore, Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck and Michael Schenker would do. It's challenging but it's exciting and a real flexing of my improvisational muscle, because that's how I see myself first and foremost. Everything else comes after. That's why I love jazz and blues so much, the emphasis with those styles is about being caught in the moment. What I want to do — say for a song like "Lux Æterna," which has this fuckin' crazy noisy guitar solo — is read the energy in the audience, read the energy in myself and get even more crazy. I don't know what I'm going to play, but I guarantee you it's going to be different and just for who is experiencing it for that moment. And I'll probably never play it again! That's my gift to whoever is there at the time — and also a gift to myself.

It certainly keeps things interesting for you, doing it that way...
Honestly, I love the intro solo to "Fade to Black" but I've played that over 3,000 times! I can't wait to get to the solo at the end, which I start out the way everyone expects me to and then I don't know what the fuck I'm going to play for 15 or 16 bars, and then I come back. It's one of my favorite parts of the shows, when I get to a point where I'm asking myself, "What the fuck am I going to play?" I surprise myself and I look out at the audience and they have smiles on their faces. Everyone's happy. And I live for that. I would hate it if I had to play the same goddamn solos from every single album the exact same way... I'd cut my own throat. It needs saying, but the guitar solo in "Creeping Death" just sounds like a part of a song, not a solo anymore because I've played it so much. I want my solos to feel like *solos*.

You're the lead guitar player at the end of the day. These decisions are for you, and only for you.
Some people might hate and criticize what I'm saying, but this is what I wanna fuckin' do and this is why I'm doing it and no one's stopping me. I want to be the best musician I can be in the moment. I'm not going to rely on the recordings to do that. Sure, I'll play the bits that I think are worthy of remembering, but for the most part I'm going to play what I want. I don't even know how the rest of the guys feel about that, but I know how *I* feel about that. I'm gonna piss people off, but I don't care... it's my time, my solo and I'm gonna do whatever the fuck I want! [*Laughs*]

72 SEASONS, TRACK BY TRACK
KIRK HAMMETT DEEP-DIVES INTO THE NEW ALBUM

"72 SEASONS"
The opening track definitely starts things off with a bang.
The middle part is one of the most difficult things we've ever done. It's not because of the fingering or the grip or anything. It's all in the timing, the count is so weird. It shifts once the vocals come in. We're all unanimous — that section is one of the most difficult parts Metallica have ever recorded. Eventually we'll get it, but we're struggling with it right now.

"SHADOWS FOLLOW"
This one has some strange pushes and pulls that'll catch listeners off guard.
Us too! Those false starts near the end have a funny story behind them. They came from something we did habitually as a mistake. We weren't really sure what the next part would be, and all of us would play something and then just stop. One of us said, "You know, we keep on doing this; clearly the song wants us to do that so let's just write it into the song." It ended up being really effective. It's a good example of a song dictating to us where it wants us to go.

"SCREAMING SUICIDE"
You play a lot of bluesy hooks that aren't quite solos or leads, but they add to the flow to the song.
I've always been into super rhythmic playing, writing the rhythms and playing chunky stuff over the top, almost doing a counterpoint kinda thing. I have to say, I got a lot of that from [*late Metallica bassist*] Cliff Burton, because he was so into counterpoint, counter rhythms and polyrhythms. He was into all of that stuff. It became a part of what I do. And I love the blues. I listen to blues all the time and I love all the old blues players going back to Robert Johnson, Skip James and Charley Patton. And everything right up to modern players like Joe Bonamassa and Eric Gales. I just love the blues. If I feel like I can squeeze out a blues lick and get away with it, I'm going to do it.

"SLEEPWALK MY LIFE AWAY"
This one has some interesting scratchy noises and effects near the beginning, then it shifts from a pentatonic framework to Phrygian near the end.
Yeah, there is a Phrygian bit in the end, isn't there? But first, you know that scratchy part? I was on my way to the studio and before I left, I opened up a drawer of pedals. I saw an Eddie Van Halen phaser, grabbed it and thought, "Hey, this might be fun today." So it ended up on those scratches at the beginning of the song. And with the Phrygian bit, we look at our riffs as just riffs. It's only later where I think to myself, "Oh, that is kinda Phrygian or sounds like harmonic minor." No one goes, "Okay, I've got this Phrygian riff." It's more like it *happens* to be Phrygian. Music can be whatever you want it to be at the end of the day. We don't really think in

terms of scales. I have to say James' vocal phrasing on this album is really great and sounds next level. His lines sit very well within the songs and sound really in the pocket. This song is a great example of that.

"YOU MUST BURN!"

This feels like classic Metallica territory. The opening section is reminiscent of "Sad But True" and could easily have sat on the Black Album.

It's my favorite song on the record, I think. There's a melodic riff in there with no singing over it that is so great and so fuckin' beautiful. It's one that James came up with, and when we first played it I actually said to him, "Bro, I think this is one of the greatest riffs you've ever written." Honestly, it's the best riff I *never* wrote. I love it so much and I'm so happy that at least one of us came up with it. And yeah, now you've said it, that heavy one is very "Sad But True." The intro is very much from that Black Album period with a sludgy kind of beat. By the time that melodic riff comes in, I'm in heaven! There's also that slow heavy bass line that comes in for the guitar solo... it's everything I want a Metallica song to be — and super fun to solo over. I mean, it's a sludgy rhythm that's low, heavy and in E; that's every guitar player's dream right there. The vocal bit that comes in over the doomy riff where James sings, "In the heat of the night" came out so cool and orchestrated.

"CROWN OF THE BARBED WIRE"

There's one riff that almost sounds like a CD skipping.

That's our deep cut with a riff that's really unique. We're using these chords that have a root on the sixth string, a fourth interval on the next string and then the octave. I don't really know what they're called. For convenience, James and I call them "ram chords" because they kinda ram through. We only use those chords rarely in Metallica so on this riff it felt like something new and different. I wouldn't have actually picked this riff to use in a song, and neither would have James. But Lars heard something in it and said, "You gotta go with this riff!" And yeah... it turned out to be something exciting and unusual for us. I remember

James saying he never would have imagined himself singing over that kind of thing, but we trusted Lars and it worked. And now we have this cool deep cut.

"CHASING LIGHT"

This one definitely leans on your love for blues-rock guitar players at points.

Players like Jimmy Page mean so much to me, so I was definitely tapping into that. It's gonna be a sad day for me when he's gone. I hate to bring up Jeff Beck's passing, but it hit me *hard*. I had a relationship with Jeff. He was one of my favorite players. I've realized that very soon what's gonna happen is what happened in the Sixties with all the jazz giants who left us. I'm kinda preparing myself mentally for times like that. All I want to do is carry on their legacy through my playing, and you can hear it on this album.

"IF DARKNESS HAD A SON" and "TOO FAR GONE"

Would it be fair to say you're probably shredding hardest on these two tunes?

Yeah, I thought to myself even though I don't tremolo pick much in my solos, if I can play songs like "Whiplash," "Blackened" or "Fight Fire with Fire," I must have *some* speed with my right hand. About three or four years ago I decided to start doing it more. The thinking is if I can do that with my rhythms, why can't I do that with my solos? I'm not a big legato guy; I only use that for the occasional run. My preference is always to pick; it sounds fuller and more aggressive, so I figured I'd explore more intense ways of doing it. That's why you hear a lot of that on this album compared to our other albums. I used to work right-hand stuff back in the *Kill 'Em All* days. For some reason I ended up stopping, but I've come back to it and feel like it's working for me all over again.

"ROOM OF MIRRORS"

This is another classic rock kind of track with a Dorian flavor instead of that minor sixth world you often live in.

We absolutely live in that minor sixth world. We also love flattened fifths. All types of music have a formula. I learned this when Rob and I were doing duets, playing music from all over the world. I started seeing common factors in different styles of music. Just like blues comes from a 1/4/5, most music will have its own natural formula. You reduce it down to a few elements. If I was to do that for us, the Metallica scale would include a minor third, a flat five and a minor sixth and minor seventh. That's the basis for most of our riffs, with a healthy dose of harmonic minor thrown in there! That's the making of the Metallica scale when it comes to our riffs. But you ultimately work with what sounds good to you and go where your ears guide you. That just happens to be where our ears take us. It's our natural scale.

Kirk Hammett in action with Greeny in 2017. "I used Greeny and my ESP Mummy guitar for everything [*on the album*], going back and forth between the two," he says

JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC

"INAMORATA"

The closing track features the big climax of the album roughly seven minutes in, where layers upon layers of rhythm and lead guitars get turned into a six-string orchestra.

Lars pointed out that it's the longest song we've ever recorded, and I remember thinking, "Really? It doesn't feel that way," which is obviously a good thing. When we were putting it together I was wondering where it was going. It sounded cool, but where was it headed? Slowly, it started coming together. While we were tracking it I realized, "Holy shit! This song has so much more potential than I initially recognized." And now it's one of my favorites on the album. At one point James said, "You know what this needs? Loads of long epic harmonized guitar parts." And he literally sat down and worked out all of those bits in one hour. Afterwards, I said to him, "James, that's some really epic shit you just did there." I was blown away by his casualness about it, being like "This needs this" and then coming out with something that's as good as it gets. I live for moments like that in this band. It doesn't matter who is doing it, myself or someone else... Metallica is greater and bigger than all of us. GW

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"I was pulling from that kind of place that Geezer Butler might go and just started feeling it with my eyes closed, letting each note speak," Robert Trujillo says

"METALLICA WOULDN'T SOUND LIKE METALLICA WITHOUT THOSE THIN LIZZY-STYLE LAYERS, RIGHT?"

DIARY OF A BASS MAN

EIGHTY SEASONS (AKA 20 YEARS) INTO HIS CAREER WITH METALLICA, BASSIST **ROBERT TRUJILLO** TALKS US THROUGH THE WRITING AND RECORDING PROCESS FOR *72 SEASONS*, REVEALING HOW CERTAIN MOMENTS REMIND HIM OF SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES, BLACK SABBATH AND... CHEECH & CHONG?

WORDS BY
AMIT SHARMA

PHOTO BY
TIM SACCENTI

WHILE THERE'S NO question Cliff Burton and Jason Newsted's contributions to Metallica will echo for eternity, Robert Trujillo has now been in the group longer than any of his predecessors. The Warwick endorsee — who had played in Suicidal Tendencies, Ozzy Osbourne, Black Label Society and Jerry Cantrell's solo band prior to joining — was hired in 2003 at the end of the audition process famously captured on their fly-on-the-wall *Metallica: Some Kind of Monster* rockumentary. With Hammett co-writing four of the new songs and Trujillo helping pen three, he describes their latest work as "a very collaborative experience" — especially in light of its 2016 predecessor being solely composed by Hetfield and Ulrich, save for his contributions to "ManUNkind." This time it was very much a team effort.

"Every record is like a different journey," says Trujillo, calling *GW* just a few days after we spoke to Hammett. "There are some that lean more on Lars and James, which was the path we took for the previous record... and that ended up being a great album. And before that one, [*2008's*] *Death Magnetic* was more collaborative. I'm not saying one is better or worse; it just makes for a different experience, but it's always great. This record had more involvement from all of us. There was also all that interesting energy around the pandemic — how we had to create these songs and get the process going was a challenge because it was all happening from our home studios. That was a challenge in itself, trying to start writing and creating from that kind of first launch pad.

It must've been nice when you all finally got into a room together.
Yeah, that's when it gets really fun and interesting, standing there with all that talent and getting to play those blueprint arrangements as a unit, as a team, in person and physically. You have to do that when you're working out all the transitions and details. They all happened in person, and those nuances can make it that much more special. The whole journey lent itself to an interesting selection of songs. They always take you out to a place, like a canvas, man... each song is like a painting.

"Sleepwalk My Life Away" begins with a bass intro. That must've been fun for you, leading the charge like that.
I like that one a lot. There's that real scratchy pulse at the beginning. It's really abrasive and in your face. It's a real pissed-off way to start a song with that angry bass, but it's also got a *nastiness* in the groove. It just cultivates itself and takes you on a journey through time and space. Once we get into it, it's grooving pretty hard, like during the chorus where it's kinda on the up-beat during the key changes, but there's also this sense of flow. A lot of the songs on this album, believe it or not, remind me of driving in a convertible car along the Pacific Coast Highway in California, humming along to those big riffs. You can feel the sun hitting your face and the wind blowing into your skull while you're grooving along. That's definitely something I get from this song, but there's also that Sabbathy riff in the middle that came out really nice, which is a real banging moment.

Kirk described "You Must Burn!" as his favorite track on the new album. That must be nice to hear considering you were heavily involved.
That middle riff about four minutes in is very special to me. It might be one of my favorite riffs I've been a part of writing in this band, to be honest. It's so visual. There's this evilness to it and this dark edge, but it also has space. I was actually pulling from "Believer" by Ozzy Osbourne on that. And when you hear the vocal part, that's me singing along with James doing my best Ozzy impression. [*Laughs*] That whole section pulls from Sabbath and Ozzy's solo stuff; it has that whole call-and-answer thing going on. So yeah, the breakdown riff means a lot to me. I remember when James and I were working on that in one of the many cities we were in. A lot of these songs come from being on tour and jamming before we go on stage. So this is probably my favorite song on the album and quite possibly my favorite composition I've done with the guys. It was a very collaborative song. And I'm glad Kirk likes it! I always say to him, "Do you like soloing over this part? Is it good for you?" And he was like, "Hell yeah!" Even on the demos, soloing over that section of this song was like riding a wave for him.

The other track you heavily contributed to was "Screaming Suicide," which mixes old-school Metallica with things the band haven't quite done before.
What I love about that song is the chorus hook. It reminds me of Siouxsie Sioux or Siouxsie and the Banshees. I don't know if you put them on any sort of pedestal, but I do. James might hear something different, but to my ears that's what it sounds like. It has that flavor. This whole album is very visual. You close your eyes and the music will take you somewhere. That's always a beautiful thing. The canvases are vast and epic. Nothing is so pedestrian anymore. It's a rollercoaster ride. Sometimes you're in this amusement park of sound and moments... but it's always the *right* one. It's supposed to be an experience.

Robert Trujillo [*left*] and Kirk Hammett on stage in Cologne, Germany, June 13, 2019

When you're writing riffs, how do you know which James, Lars and Kirk will like best? Is there an art to cherry picking what you come up with?
One of the beautiful things about being in Metallica is that there's no shortage of great ideas. Our blessing is also a curse. We have more riffs than we know what to do with. With every handful of riffs we get out of Kirk, there's another 500 we didn't hear. I might have 10 spare ideas for every one I put forward, things that don't even get listened to. So I have this arsenal of bass lines and riffs that I sit on. And it's not that nobody wanted to listen to them — we just had enough. There comes a point where you don't need any more. All of these songs have a lot of cool ideas in them. "Suicide & Redemption" from *Death Magnetic*, for instance, was a bass line that I had for a long time and I always had Metallica's name written on that thing.

So it's a case of stockpiling ideas over the course of a long period of time?
Yeah. I remember jamming that one with some friends. At one point it was Brooks Wackerman, who plays in Avenged Sevenfold; we hang out a bit and occasionally record, and he was like, "Oh wait, what is *that* riff? It sounds really cool!" And I said, "Oh no, this is for Metallica!" I already knew it had Metallica's name on it. The same goes for that power groove four minutes into "You Must Burn!" — I had it already mapped out. It was something I'd been stewing up and working on because I envisioned it being something Metallica embracing. Things like that just happen. You just come across a part or riff and you just know it will sound larger than life when you hear the band playing on it, with Lars' power grooves and James' massive guitars. It's a beautiful thing being in a band like this, beyond my wildest dreams, pulling together all these riffs to be played by such amazing musicians who each have their own signature. That's a special thing for me. But the scary thing is that there's always another 10 other riffs that didn't make it to the drawing board... they're just sitting there. It's gotta be the best for Metallica.

GINA WETZLER/GETTY IMAGES

The tempos of these riffs feel really well-considered. "If Darkness Had a Son," for example, has an infectious mid-tempo bounce.

I really like those riffs you can sing. For some reason this one reminds me of Cheech & Chong in a car singing the riff going, "Temptation! Duh-duh-duh!" It's got this swagger to it that I love. Sure, there's a simplicity to it but also this power groove. This is a song that I think is going to be very impactful live. I can really visualize playing it in front of a crowd, with people just bouncing and grooving and singing the riff... which happens a lot in this band. A lot of these tracks are going to be really fun to play live. We've been working on them pretty religiously and can't wait to present them to the world... warts and all.

The same level of attention has gone into the stabs on songs like "Shadows Follow," where chords ring out at certain points and get cut off at others.

That's why there's a cultivation process with each song. There's a certain amount of stabs and hits we throw in, then we might deviate into tribal sections here and there. Obviously the descending chordal movements are an important part of the equation. Even the ascending parts play a big part. I like the long descent on this particular track. It's pretty cool and sounds nasty. It's like saying, "Take that!" after you've been getting pummeled. You never know what you're going to get. That's what happens in this band. It's a very clever experience on many levels.

"Room of Mirrors" presents an interesting mix of melodic and heavy.

Yeah, I agree. There's a nice balance on this track between stupid heavy stuff with the melodic layered harmonies, the feel-good stuff that reminds me of Thin Lizzy. Big musical statements with a fair amount of accents and jabs. There's a lot of energy in this track. I love those harmonized guitar moments because they feel like melodic sections. It's something that works so well for this band. Metallica wouldn't sound like Metallica without those Thin Lizzy-style layers, right?

And the grand finale "Inamorata" closes with finesse and panache.

You pretty much said it... what an *epic* way to finish this journey. It's a closing statement with five exclamation points. It's another feel-good song with the power grooves, but there's also a funkiness to it, almost in a Sabbath kind of way. It's another song that makes me envision driving in the car with the hood down. Then it all strips and breaks down in nothing, the simplest moments. I was pulling from that kind of place that Geezer Butler might go and just started feeling it with my eyes closed, letting each note speak. Then James introduces himself into that moment and the drums build and build. It takes you *out*! From thereon, you're driving down the road and end up really far from where it started. It's a very powerful song and very dynamic.

We're guessing your prized Warwick five-string and Ampeg SVT-2 Pro amp heads came in handy in the studio?

We usually do what we call a "taste test" with our ears. We don't play favorites. I'll try eight different basses on whatever section of a song, and whichever sounds best is the one that wins. It's all about how it sits in between the guitars and the impact of each note and how it represents the song. In the studio I find those SVT-2 Pros, as well as some vintage amp heads, tend to have the right amount of warmth and punch. The bass needs to have a personality. There are a couple I have that seem to win all the time, and yeah, the scary thing is one of them is a five-string. Traditionally I tend to gravitate to an old-school four-string P-bass, but that five-string I call my "secret weapon" always has serious magic and resonates [*with*] the walls. It makes everything rumble!

Why do you think that is?

It could be down to the wood... who knows?! There's always your attack as a player, your skill set and technique. I always like to have a little bit of nail to get extra grit in my fingers. I'm not against using a pick, but I'll only use one when the personality of that kind of tone is needed. A lot of the time, if you get the right amount of callus and nail, you can go a long way. You can find a lot of punch in your fingertips depending on how you hit that string. Those one or two basses always seem to work against what Kirk and James do and speak to the songs of Metallica! They're not even allowed to leave the studio. They live there and they *have* to live there. We don't want anything to happen to those things! GW

MASTER OF DOWNSTROKES

IN THIS 2009 INTERVIEW (MAKING ITS FIRST APPEARANCE IN *GW*), **JAMES HETFIELD** GIVES YOU THE LOWDOWN ON HOW HE DEVELOPED HIS JAW-DROPPING RIFFING CHOPS

FEW PLAYERS CAN CLAIM TO MATCH the rhythm guitar chops of James Hetfield. Famed for his breakneck alternate-picking speed, flawless palm muting and, above all, his wrist-cramping downpicking stamina, the Metallica frontman has inspired a generation of hard rock and metal guitarists. What's all the more impressive is his ability to do all this while singing! Try to play and sing any heavy/fast Metallica song, such as "Master of Puppets" and you'll discover the meaning of tightness and coordination.

Hetfield's rhythm style, in terms of playing and writing riffs, is legendary in the metal world. Following his example will help you develop a metronomic riffing style and picking accuracy, one which is also combined with a looseness that will help you not just in playing metal, but other styles as well.

Back in 2009, during one of Metallica's many stadium tours, we had the opportunity to sit down and enjoy a vitamin drink with Mr. Hetfield as he revealed how he developed his awe-inspiring rhythm skills. Below are the results, plus two Hetfield-inspired riffs (with tab and audio), none of which has ever appeared in *GW* till now.

When did you get interested in becoming a musician?

I started taking piano lessons when I was about eight because my mom once saw me basically playing drums on a piano at someone's house and thought, "Oh, he's a musician!" So I took some lessons at some old lady's house, which stunk, but she gave me cookies at the end of each lesson. I took those lessons for three years and thought, "This sucks; I'm not learning any Aerosmith songs here!" I was playing shit I had no interest in, so I graduated to guitar because my brothers, who are around 10 years older than me, were in bands at the time so there was always a drum kit, piano and guitar sitting around the house. They were like toys.

WORDS BY
NICK CRACKNELL

LESSON CONTENT BY
CHARLIE GRIFFITHS

PHOTO BY
TIM SACCENTI

I loved hard rock, so I picked up the guitar.

When you started out on guitar, did you think you'd play rhythm parts, or did you just want to learn to play solos?
When I started playing guitar, I would fiddle around with pretty much everything. I was trying out different rhythms and trying to play [*Aerosmith guitarist*] Joe Perry solos, but then I just started gravitating more toward rhythm because of guys like Tony Iommi, Rudolf Schenker of the Scorpions and even AC/DC. You know, very rhythm-based stuff. And then later I got into riffing, as, to me, that's what makes a song great. If you've got a great riff, you've got a great song. Some dude can do an amazing solo, but if it's over a crappy riff the song's still gonna be crap. A riff is the meat of the song.

You're renowned for your rhythm playing, but how would you define your style?
Percussive. I love playing drums, so a lot of the rhythms come from beats that I hear in my head. A lot of times when you're doing a rhythm and the drums play along exactly to that rhythm, it's less effective. I see that a lot in certain bands these days: "Here's the guitar riff, and the kick and snare are doing the exact same thing." With Metallica, Lars [*Ulrich*] is always playing a little against the riff. It's almost like I'm the drummer and he does counter-beats to my rhythm. Onstage, the only thing Lars has in his ear monitors is my guitar and some vocals. So I'm kinda keeping the tempo of the song, and he's able to get a little crazier on the drums.

How much of your rhythm style can be attributed to Lars' drumming?
Quite a bit because, as I say, I have a lot of room to lay down. I might not be able to be as free as possible on some stuff because when I get loose everything goes a little wobbly! But I'm able to show Lars some drum stuff and he's able to show me riff stuff, you know?

I'm a frustrated drummer and he's a frustrated singer-guitarist! So it's really great that we're able to accept each other's dreams that way and see it as a positive thing, not just, "Get outta my territory!"

Kirk Hammett [*left*] and James Hetfield on stage in New York City's Central Park, September 24, 2022

Who inspired your rhythmic riffing style?
My rhythm gods are Tony Iommi, Rudolf Schenker and Malcolm Young — guys who just keep it steady. The Misfits too, and even the Ramones with their simplicity. It's all downpicking! Watch some footage of Johnny Ramone, and you'll go, "Wow!"

How has your rhythm playing developed over time? Do you listen to early Metallica albums and think, 'I could play that a lot tighter now'?
Hell, yeah! I do that with stuff on *Death Magnetic*, man! I'm a perfectionist, but I realize you've got to have some looseness and character. I think the 'anal-ness' peaked right around *Justice* [*1988's* And Justice for All...]. It was like, how dry can the guitar be? I wanted it as in-your-face and dry as possible. Reverb was, you know, "Get that outta here! What are you thinking!" But after a while the bone-dry tone got to be a little lifeless and flat, so I realized there was a balance to be struck. On *Load* and *ReLoad* we tried to get a little looser and bluesier. Greasy is the word. It didn't give me the same feel. I love to riff, to downpick, alternate pick and gallop... That's what I've always wanted to do.

How did you develop your incredibly fast downpicking style?
Some of the Black Sabbath stuff didn't have a lot of speed to it; it was big single-note riffs, all about the left-hand bending. The right hand for me came more about as a challenge, due to having two guitar players in the early days, first with Dave [*Mustaine*] and then with Kirk [*Hammett*]. It was a challenge to see who could play faster, or who would give up first, and then you'd call that dude a pussy and you'd both work on it some more!

A lot of challenges came from other covers we were doing like the Misfits. I would look at [*Misfits guitarist*] Doyle [*Wolfgang von Frankenstein*] and see that he was downpicking everything. On a song like "Green Hell," for example, I was like, "Is he really downpicking that whole thing?!" So I guess my picking style came about from competitiveness.

What about when Mustaine left and you became the main rhythm player?
I was competing with myself, for sure. You know, "Here's the drum beat; can I play along to that?" And, to me, downpicking always sounded better than alternate picking. Just in the way the string stops and the chunkiness of it... But there's a point where you just can't do it and you're making too much palm noise while you're pounding on it, so then you have to revert to alternate picking. But downpicking is definitely tighter and heavier. And that's the end of it!

So, do you think that always alternate picking is a bit of a cop-out?
Now, not necessarily, no. There are tons of songs that we gallop on. You gotta do that! There may be guys out there who can do that with all downpicking, but it gets to that point where if it's too fast, it sounds muddled. The challenge is for it to sound as good as possible. I guess, yeah, in the early days alternate picking was considered a cop-out.

How do you keep your arm from locking up with tension during heavyweight bouts of extensive live riffing?
When you see a sprinter running he looks really bunched and tight and focused, but you see slow-motion footage

of him and his jaw is swinging and he looks really loose! He's swinging as fast as he can, but he has that looseness to him. That's what guitar playing is like. You can't be super tight without that looseness or you just tense up and you're working against yourself. You gotta be loose with it. It just takes practice. What I'll do is just go as fast as I can for as long as I can, and when you feel that burn just chill out for a bit or take a stretch and then go for it again. Pretty soon you'll find you can go longer at it each time.

Do you do any specific warm-up exercises before a show to help you to loosen up?

Not me! I'm fine. Kirk has some things with his elbow and wrist and sometimes his fingers, and Rob [*Trujillo, bassist*] with his forearm — you know, he's a tarantula! He's got a few issues, but for me the only problems I have are calluses building up on the finger bone under the skin that come just from playing too much. But as far as muscles go, thank God, I'm doing fine.

You have an unusual way of holding your pick, clasping it between your thumb and index and middle fingers, as opposed to just the thumb and index finger.

Yeah, I've always done that. That's the way I hold a pencil. School teachers would whack me on the hand and say, "That's not right!" but it just made sense to me. I tried it the other way to see how it would feel, but there's something about having that extra finger that stabilizes the top of the pick. Otherwise it moves too much. But I go through picks non-stop, man. They're ground away! You see pick grindings all over my guitar. I'm working on this pick with Dunlop, trying to emulate that tortoise-shell pick sound — that's obviously illegal — that has that "shaley" sound to it. It's almost stone-like but with a flex. So now I go through 10 picks a show instead of 30!

In "Nothing Else Matters," you fingerpick the first part then somehow produce a pick from your palm to play the riff and solo. We can't figure out how you do it!

Where do I hold it? I think I hide it. I sort of pinch it in the arch below my middle finger. I'll check that out when I'm playing tonight! It probably comes from playing a lot of different styles. When you're playing country stuff, you're playing the rhythm and the melody within it. On songs like "Fade to Black," "The Day That Never Comes" and "Unforgiven," I'm doing the rhythm modulations behind the lead melody at the same time. That's something that's become my Metallica style, I guess.

In terms of rhythm guitar, do you feel you have competition in today's new bands?

There are a lot of nemeses or nemesi [*sic*] out there! There are bands that are pulling off some amazing rhythm stuff. Machine Head — amazing riffs. If you've got a catchy riff, you're my competition. If they've been inspired by me, that's great. It's called recycling, man! It comes back and it makes me step up too, and I love that. GW

FIG. 1 OCTAVE RIFFING

This Hetfield-style riff is based on the dark-sounding E Phrygian mode (E, F, G, A, B, C, D) and features sliding strummed octaves on the A and G strings pitted against palm-muted open low E notes. Use your fret hand's 1st and 4th fingers to form the octave shapes, keeping the fingers flat to the fretboard in order to mute the unused strings and suppress any unwanted sounds.

Shift your hand up and down the strings as quickly as possible — lazy slides can sound untidy.

FIG. 2 HARMONIZED MELODIC RIFF

This example is inspired by the kind of melodic harmony-leads riff that James and Kirk will often play together, so we've added a harmony part, indicated with smaller tab numbers. The harmony is based on diatonic 3rds and 4ths, with both guitars playing the same melodic rhythms, but one plays three or four notes higher in the key, based on the underlying chord and its associated scale.

For the first two implied chords, Em and Bm7/D, the corresponding scale would be E natural minor (E, F♯, G, A, B, C, D), and for the B7/D♯ chord it's E harmonic minor (E, F♯, G, A, B, C, D♯).

For audio of this lesson, visit guitarworld.com/june2023

FIG. 1 sliding octaves riffing

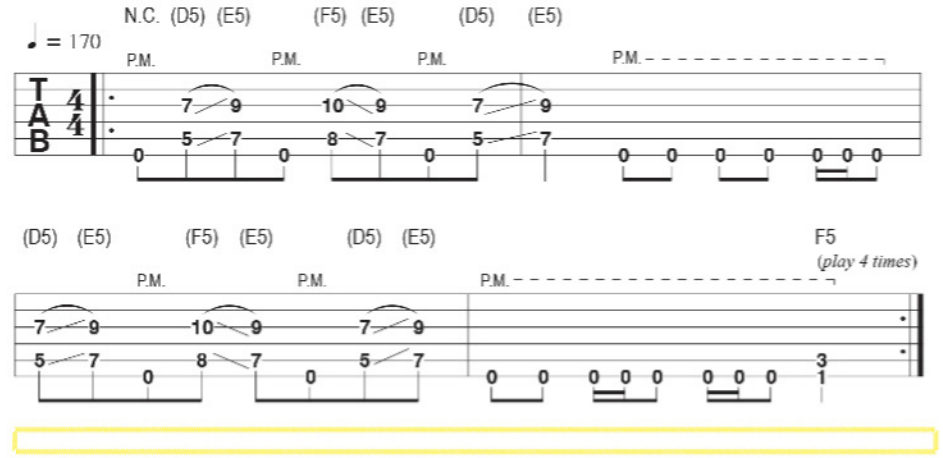
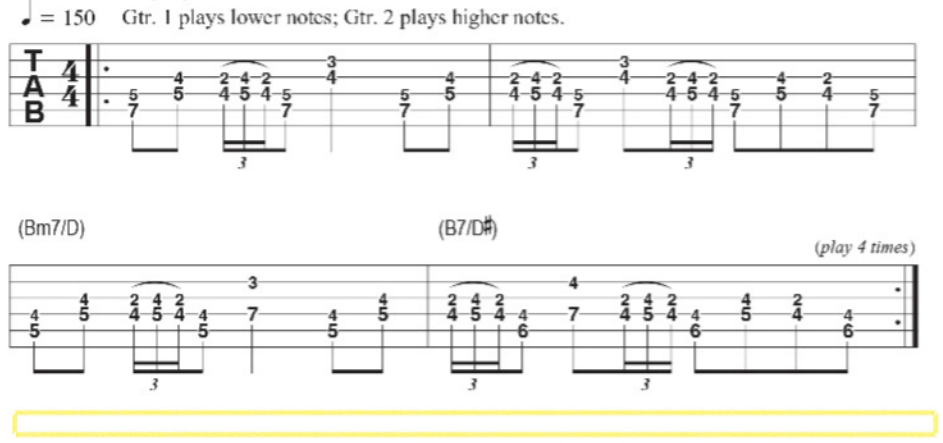


FIG. 2 harmonized melodic riff



KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES FOR GLOBAL CITIZEN

Baldacci Guitars artist Trey Odum with
his custom Bighorn hollowbody.
Photo courtesy of
Lindsi Rian Creative, LLC

Baldacci Guitars

SOUND CHECK

GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

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EPIPHONE POWER PLAYERS LES PAUL AND SG

By Chris Gill

THE VARIETY OF solidbody electrics with shorter scales and smaller bodies designed for pre-teen beginners has increased substantially over the last few years, so it was only a matter of time before Epiphone joined the crowd. But while the new low-price Epiphone Power Players series guitars are clearly targeted towards beginners, these smaller-than-usual Les Paul and SG models also have a lot to offer more experienced players in terms of sound, playability and quality. Both models provide the timeless appeal of some of the most popular solidbody models ever made in a format more comfortable for tiny hands, but they're also a great option for big boys and girls looking for a cool travel guitar, a useful studio tool or an affordable backup.

FEATURES From a distance, the Epiphone Power Players Les Paul and SG look exactly like their full-size counterparts (with the tell-tale exception of the full-size humbucking pickups) as they are perfectly scaled down by about 10 percent, making them more 9/10 models than the typical smaller ¾ size. The necks have a 22.73-inch scale length; the body length and width dimensions are about an inch smaller while the body depth is 1 3/8 inches thick; and the SG and Les Paul models weigh about 6 and 7.4 pounds respectively. Both models feature a mahogany body and neck, with the SG featuring a slim, contoured double-cutaway design while the Les Paul has the iconic single-cutaway body with single-ply top binding. Both models have bolt-on necks with 22 medium jumbo frets, an Indian laurel fingerboard with pearloid trapezoid inlays, a SlimTaper D profile, 12-inch radius and white plastic 41mm nut. Both models have a side-mounted output jack, with the SG featuring a recessed barrel jack while the Les Paul has a jack plate.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE:
$279
MANUFACTURER:
Epiphone, epiphone.com

- The 22.73-inch scale length and smaller body dimensions provide easier playability for beginners or players with small hands.
- Epiphone 700T (bridge) and 650R (neck) humbucking pickups with ceramic magnets provide hot output with impressive clarity.
- The bolt-on necks feature an Indian laurel fingerboard with single-ply binding, trapezoid inlays and 22 medium jumbo frets.
- The Power Players bundle includes a gig bag, strap, picks and cable.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:** Epiphone Power Players guitars are perfect for young beginners as well as experienced players looking for an affordable backup, travel guitar or cool studio tool that costs less than a boutique stomp box.

Hardware includes a "lightning bar" compensated wraparound (non-adjustable) bridge, die-cast tuners with kidney buttons, black (SG) or gold (Les Paul) top-hat reflector knobs and black (SG) or cream (Les Paul) pickup mounting rings. Electronics consist of Epiphone 700T (bridge) and 650R (neck) humbuckers with ceramic magnets, individual volume and tone controls for each pickup and a three-way pickup selector toggle. The bridge humbuckers on our examples had average resistance of 14.7k ohms while the neck pickups averaged 7.6k ohms. Both models are strung with .010-.046 strings that provide adequate tension at pitch on these shorter scale necks. Finish options are Dark Matter Ebony, Lava Red and Ice Blue. Power Players guitars are sold in bundle packages that also include a gig bag, strap, picks and cable.

PERFORMANCE Guitars in the sub $500 range seem to keep getting better every few years, but even so I still wasn't prepared for just how nice the overall construction, look, feel and vibe was on both Power Players guitars. The playability of both the Les Paul and SG was comparable to that of their full-size professional counterparts, with the shorter scale lengths making it easier to perform wide stretches from the fifth to twelfth fret, but also not feeling too cramped, confined or narrow for players with big hands like myself. The smaller size is perfect for enabling pre-teen kids to play comfortably and with confidence, but I also recommend it as a studio secret weapon for performing solos that can be physically challenging to play on a full-size instrument.

Plugged in, both models deliver aggressive grunt and growl that would fool the most discriminating tone snobs in a blind tone test. The pickups' clarity is quite impressive and even the ultra-cheap capacitors deliver honking "woman tone" when backed down. Because both of the models feature mahogany construction (no maple cap on this Les Paul), they both sound similar, although the Les Paul has a touch more midrange depth and a slightly warmer overall vibe while the SG possesses a touch more bite in its upper mids.

My only complaint is that the intonation of both models wasn't dead-on accurate due to the fixed, compensated wraparound bridge, which resulted in a few strings (particularly the meddlesome B and G) playing sharp around the 11th and 12th frets and above. If you demand perfect intonation, an adjustable bridge is a recommended upgrade.

GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

Encore!

PRS SONZERA 20 COMBO

By Paul Riario

"IT'S LIKE DÉJÀ vu all over again." Yep, Yogi Berra, your eyes don't deceive you — it's definitely the PRS Sonzera 20 combo, but not the one you've seen before. In what appears to be a "New York minute" hiatus, PRS surreptitiously yanked the former titular amp and replaced it with the now-revamped Sonzera 20 combo. According to PRS chief amp designer Doug Sewell, "I am very happy to re-release the new Sonzera 20 combo with improved construction techniques, refined voicing and fresh cosmetics..." And while some of us didn't notice, I can report the refresh is welcome, and I'd go further to say that the overhauled PRS Sonzera 20 has re-emerged as a combo-slayer that punches above its wattage with killer tone that seriously outguns most other studio- and gig-worthy amplifiers in its class.

FEATURES Just like its predecessor, the Sonzera 20 is an all-tube 20-watt combo with a single Celestion V-Type 70-watt 12-inch speaker housed in a hybrid open/closed back cabinet. Its plywood cabinet is handsomely dressed in textured black vinyl with a salt and pepper grille cloth and silver piping (so much more attractive than its previous gold piping and gold motif). The combo features an instantly familiar layout of two channels with independent EQ controls with the Clean channel providing bass and treble controls, and the Gain channel offering bass, mid and treble controls. The Clean channel also has a volume control, while the Gain channel has level and drive knobs plus a bright switch. Besides a channel select switch, both channels share global presence and reverb controls. This Sonzera 20 came loaded with a pair of Sovtek 5881 tubes (or 6L6 short bottle) and four 12AX7/ECC83 tubes for the preamp and tube-driven spring reverb. Peering around back reveals the Sonzera 20 Combo is built like a tank with custom-wound transformers, a mounted bias adjustment section, speaker output jacks (16-ohm, a pair of 8-ohm and a pair of 4-ohm parallel), mono effects loop send and return jacks, and a footswitch jack for the included footswitch for switching channels and turning the reverb on or off.

PERFORMANCE Firing up the Clean channel, I found the Sonzera 20 comes out swinging with authoritative and robust cleans, much in part to the Celestion V-type speaker filling up space with blunt force and high headroom that belies the amp's size. Moving the knobs around, I found it's a beautifully voiced channel with a smooth attack that's less twangy or airy, and moreover, its duo of 5881 power tubes offers a pushed musical compression that yields a boosted boldness, making its presence known with fattened cleans. Even at high volume levels and regardless of pickup output, the channel retains definition and clarity and is perfectly primed as a pedal platform.

There's a clear seamlessness in tone between the Clean and Gain channels — as if they were meant to complement each other when switching from one to the other. PRS made it a point to make the Gain channel similar to the Clean by inserting additional gain stages and its own tone stack, which reveals its multi-layered saturation and sweetened crunch that never sounds boxy. It's quite a feat, because the Sonzera 20, to my ears, has the overdriven complexity of boutique amps twice its price. The amp sounds best with the Drive control hovering around noon, and increasing it only makes the distortion sound "hotter" rather than sustained, which is why the amp has the potential as a force to be reckoned with when paired with the right gain pedals and boosts. Finally, the ambient warmth of its spring reverb is gorgeous and never gets in the way of the amp's character, but if you want splashy, you'll need to find that enhancement elsewhere (and hey, the amp has an effects loop for that). Overall, the Sonzera 20 combo is so damn impressive that it's only a matter of time before many players will be singing its praises.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $999
MANUFACTURER: PRS Guitars, prsguitars.com

- The Sonzera 20 combo offers two completely independent channels with lush cleans and sweetened crunch laced with clarity and definition.
- The amp features a tube-driven, three-spring spring reverb that offers ambient depth with smooth reflections.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** The two-channel Sonzera 20 is a loud 20-watt powerhouse combo capable of multi-hued clean and crunch tones that are guaranteed to dazzle.

Performance Enhancement

BOSS KATANA-50 MKII EX

By Chris Gill

WHEN BOSS INTRODUCED the Katana-50 MkII in late 2019, it instantly became a best-selling product. This powerful little 50-watt 1x12 combo provided ample stage-level volume output, expressive sound quality, an impressive variety of amp and effect models and numerous useful features for less than $300, delivering some of the best bang-for-the-buck in the amp market. Now, more than three years later, Boss has rolled out an expanded version called the Katana-50 MkII EX, which essentially adds several new jacks and functions to the amp that greatly increase its live performance capabilities.

FEATURES The EX model's top-facing control panel looks identical to that of the regular 50 MkII with the exception of the "EX" designation. It features a rotary switch for selecting five amp models (acoustic, clean, crunch, lead and brown), an amp Variation switch, gain, volume, bass, middle, treble, reverb and master control knobs, dual concentric knobs for booster/mod and fx/delay, power switch with standby/0.5-/25-/50-watt settings, Tone Setting buttons Channel 1 and 2 for saving four presets and a Panel button for selecting settings according to the current control knob positions.

The rear panel is where the "EX" features come into play. New additions include a ¼-inch line output jack and ¼-inch jack for connecting an optional GA-FC foot controller unit in addition to the previous power amp in, expression pedal, phones/recording out, aux in and USB jacks. The line output jack features cabinet simulation to send the amp's natural tone to a sound system without a mic, while the GA-FC jack allows users to connect an optional GA-FC or GA-FC EX foot controller to the amp to select channels, engage boost and effects and use additional expression pedals. When the GA-FC is connected it also gives the user the option to access four additional presets for a total of 8 preset locations (configurable via the BOSS Tone Studio software). Also newly added is a stereo expand feature that allows users to connect two MkII amps together via the line out and power amp in jacks and operate them in unison with true stereo output. If you're familiar with this feature on the Katana 100 MkII and Artist MkII combos and heads, note that there is no stereo expand/expand switch but rather the stereo expand function is engaged by powering up each amp while holding down the Channel 2 and Panel buttons.

The amp models and their variations remain the same in all their previous glory, as do the effects, which consist of over 60 varieties that include boost/distortion, modulation, auto wah, pitch shift, delay and reverb. The amp and effect models as well as EQ settings and signal routings can be edited in detail using free Boss Tone Studio software.

PERFORMANCE Because the Boss Katana-50 MkII is one of the most popular amps of the last three years and you've probably heard or played one, I won't go into any detail about its sounds. Suffice to say it sounds pretty damn good, provides wonderfully expressive feel and even the highest gain settings clean up when you back the guitar's volume control just like on a good old tube amp.

Is the EX version worth the extra $70? If you plan on using the amp to perform live, the answer is a definitive yes. Of course, you'll need to invest an additional $125 to $150 for a GA-FC or GA-FC EX foot controller, but being able to switch channels and engage effects with one stomp on a footswitch is much better than fiddling around with the amp's control panel. If you already own a non-EX Katana-50 MkII and plan on upgrading, don't trade it in. Instead I recommend keeping it as it can be connected to an EX to take advantage of the stereo expand feature, which will give you a true stereo rig, for less than a grand, that sounds truly incredible.

GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $339.99
MANUFACTURER:
Boss, boss.info

- The ¼-inch line output jack features cabinet simulation to send the amp's natural tone to a sound system and enables stereo expansion when connected to another Katana MkII amp.
- The GA-FC jack allows users to connect an optional GA-FC or GA-FC EX foot controller to the amp to select channels, engage boost and effects and use additional expression pedals.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
While the original Boss Katana-50 MkII is still an unbeatable amp for studio or practice applications, the new EX version's features make it a better choice for live performance, thanks to its foot controller and stereo expansion capabilities.

Buzz Bin

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

TWA SH9 Scott Henderson Signature Distortion

I MIGHT BE in the minority, but I'll take a great distortion pedal any day over an overdrive. Why? For one, I love the sustain and saturation, and furthermore, by simply rolling back the gain or my guitar's volume knob — voilà, I have overdrive. It's not that complicated. What seems complicated, though, is that it took nearly three years to create the TWA SH9 Scott Henderson signature distortion pedal (what?!). That's right, the intensive collaboration between jazz/blues fusion guitar giant Scott Henderson and creator of the legendary Tube Screamer, Susumu Tamura, has yielded the TWA SH9 — a massive improvement and pronounced mod of the classic Ibanez SD-9 Sonic Distortion (also a Tamura original) and reissue Maxon SD-9 Sonic Distortion pedals. If you've been following the meticulous work of Tamura, you'll find he's spent a great deal of time updating his Screamer creations with the likes of the impeccable Apex 808 Overdrive among a few other notable Tamura-Mod Screamers. Now, Tamura's cloistered focus to build a better mousetrap is undeniable with the arrival of the TWA SH-9 as Henderson's newly minted signature pedal. And while Henderson declared the former SD-9 "the best distortion pedal ever made," you are entitled to debate that, but I can soundly say — as someone who owns the reissue — this new iteration is the finest Sonic Distortion available.

Henderson had laid out a litany of shortcomings from the original pedal (from the narrow range of the tone control to the lack of low end), all of which Tamura addressed by redesigning the tone stack, shifting the center frequency of the Tone control to emphasize the lower-mids, increasing output level, and allowing the SH9 to operate with 9- or 18-volt power (for increased headroom with less compression and a slightly different distortion character). Also, premium components such as ALPS potentiometers, Marushin jacks, KOA/Speer resistors and WIMA, Nichicon and Kemet capacitors are used throughout the SH9 circuit in order to maintain the utmost fidelity. Gone is the sickly lime green paint job for a traditional die-cast zinc chassis in a metallic purple powder coating (with a choice of faceplate logo colors), and true-bypass operation.

I still hold fast that the SD-9 is a great pedal with a distinct distortion unlike any other, despite its limitations. If anything, its smooth character can be pinpointed as warmly overdriven with scooped mids and borderline fuzzy at its peak. But now it's impossible to dispute the SH-9's renewed vitality as a Sonic Distortion on steroids. Here, the saturation is sonically animated and richly layered, and just like Tamura's other mods, every frequency detail is widely enhanced and boldly accentuated with clarity. Single notes sound thick, with just the right amount of compression to make guitar solos sing with fluid warmth. It's no surprise Henderson is smitten with his upgraded signature pedal, and you'd be too if you dig a distortion with unparalleled responsiveness. The pedal is indeed costly, but Tamura seems to have nailed the tonal recipe for discriminating players who demand their gain pedals to be second to none. — *Paul Riario*

STREET PRICE: $299
MANUFACTURER: TWA, godlyke.com

IN DEEP
by Andy Aledort

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/june2023

THEORIES OF RELATIVITY

Soloing over relative major and minor chords

COUNTLESS CLASSIC SONGS have been built using familiar combinations of relative major and minor chords. As you may know, if you start from a major chord, for example, G, its relative minor is rooted three half steps lower; in this case, that would be Em. Likewise, if you start from a minor chord, say, Am, its relative major chord is three half steps higher; in this case, that would be C. Songs such as the Beatles' "This Boy," John Lennon's "Instant Karma," Neil Young's "Rockin' in the Free World," Pink Floyd's "Wish You Were Here," Tom Petty's "I Won't Back Down" and many others are built from the shifting axis between relative major and minor chords. The focus of this month's column is on devising melodies over relative major/minor progressions by connecting the common chord tones these pairs of chords share.

FIGURE 1 is a melodic line played over 16-bar chord progression that's based on two different pairs of relative major and minor chords. The first eight bars are played over a repeating two-bar chord change consisting of one bar on F(sus2) followed by one bar on Dm(sus2). Broadly, the melody is based on the F major pentatonic scale (F, G, A, C, D) over F(sus2) and D minor pentatonic (D, F, G, A, C) over Dm(sus2). As you can see, both scales are made up of the same five notes.

I introduce an extra note to F major pentatonic, B♭, which is the 4th of F. Adding this note gives us what's known as the F major hexatonic scale (F, G, A, B♭, C, D). This scale works well over both F major-type and D minor-type chords, and other related chords as well, as demonstrated in our sample solo.

The articulation of this melodic line is essential to the way it is intended to "speak." I begin with ascending and descending finger slides between D and C on the G string, followed by a double hammer/pull between A, C and G and then a double slide and pull-off between A, B♭ and G. Utilizing slides, hammer-ons and pull-offs in this way is known as legato (smooth and connected) phrasing.

FIGURES 2 and **3** focus on F-to-Dm and how the rhythm pattern under the single-note line is articulated.

FIG. 1

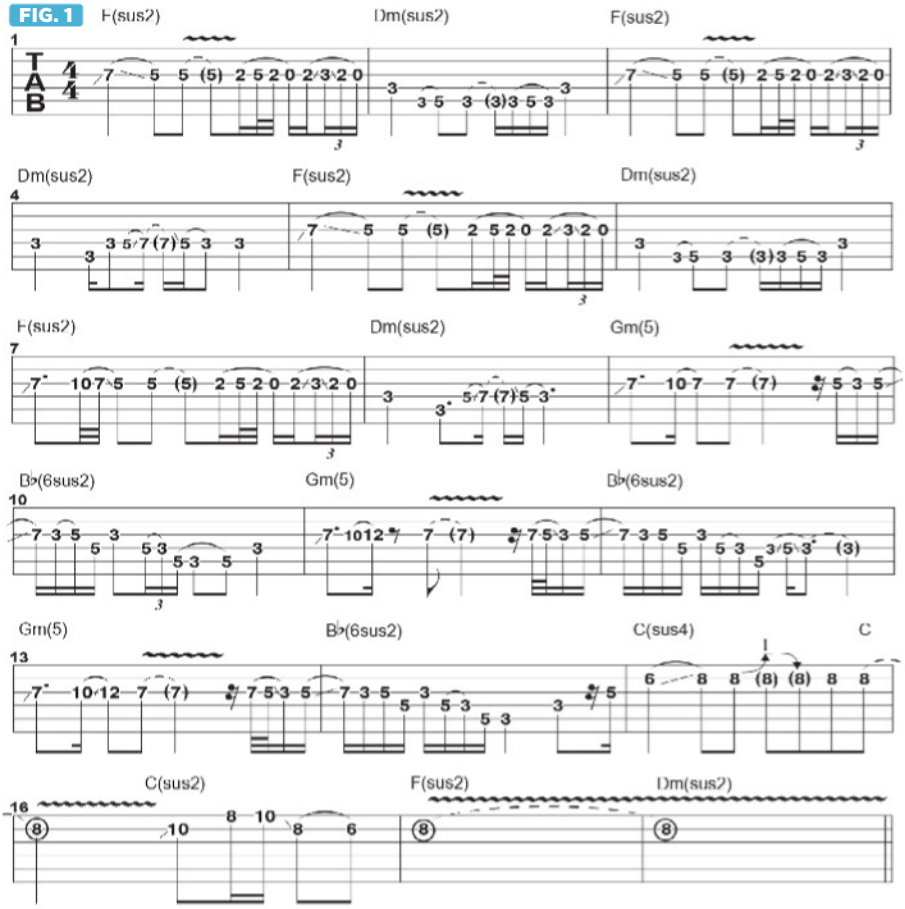


FIG. 2

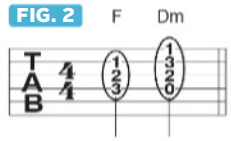


FIG. 3

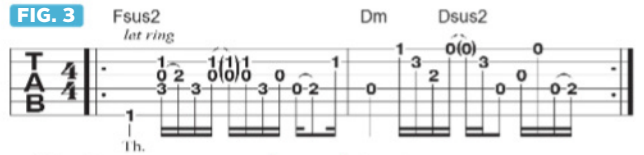


FIG. 4

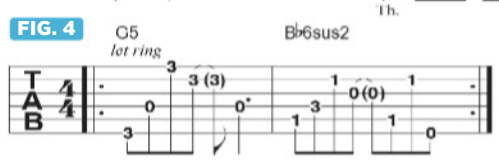
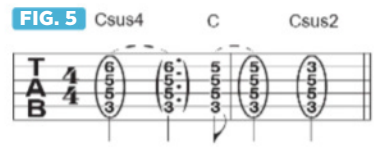


FIG. 5



Bars 9-14 of **FIGURE 1** modulate to the relative key pair B♭ major and G minor, with the relative minor chord, Gm (actually just G5 here) occurring first, followed by B♭(6sus2). To improvise over these chords, I use the relative scales G minor pentatonic (G, B♭, C, D, F) and B♭ major pentatonic (B♭, C, D, F, G). As you can see, the two scales consist of the same five notes, starting from either G or B♭. Legato phrasing is employed once again for the lines played over these alternating chords. **FIGURE 4** details the arpeggiation of the accompanying chord voicings I use for my backing track here.

The progression then wraps up with the V chord, moving from Csus4 to C to Csus2, as illustrated in **FIGURE 5**.

***GW* associate editor Andy Aledort is recognized worldwide for his vast contributions to guitar instruction. His latest album, *Light of Love*, is available now.**

ALISON HASBACH

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/june2023

TOOLS OF THE TRADE, PART 3

The 1952 Fender Esquire

OVER THE LAST two columns, I demonstrated the attributes of two of my favorite guitars: the 1954 Gibson Les Paul goldtop with P90 pickups, and the 1961 Gibson dot-neck ES-335. This month, we'll continue our expedition with another guitar I consider to be an essential tool of the trade — the 1952 Fender Esquire.

The Esquire is a single-pickup ax, fitted with one singe-coil pickup in the bridge position. Fender included a metal plate that sits over the pickup and the bridge; this is commonly referred to as the "ashtray," because most people would remove this metal cover, turn it on its face and use it as an ashtray. I like playing the guitar with the ashtray in place.

There's something appealing about the feel and sound of the instrument with the metal plate on there; it changes the pick-hand angle and also provides some different tonal options, all of which I like to exploit. In fact, if you want to do a dead-on impersonation of blues great Albert Collins, you have to leave the ashtray on! There's some sort of reverb-y "ping" that happens in the sound with the plate on there.

Incredibly, you can rule the world with one pickup. There's a three-way toggle switch on the guitar that engages different electronics within it and provides different tonal options, which I will demonstrate.

FIGURE 1 illustrates an example played with the toggle switch in the middle position, known as position 2, which is considered "normal" mode, with the volume and tone controls active. I begin with a volume swell, striking the first note, an A bent up a whole step to B, with the volume off, and I immediately turn up the volume, resulting in a swell. The lines in bars 1 and 2 are based on the E blues scale (E, G, A, B♭, B, D).

In bars 3-7, I switch to rapid hybrid picking, combining flatpicking on the low E string with fingerpicking on the higher strings. This hybrid-picked pattern is based on alternating dyads (two-note chords) that ascend through bars 4-6 and then descend through bar 7. The figure then returns to licks based on the E blues scale in bars 8-10.

In **FIGURE 2**, I continue the phrases by initially ascending through different positions of the E blues scale, moving from 9th to 10th to 12th position. I then descend through the remainder of the phrase from 12th to 10th to 7th to 2nd position. Notice the "tone swell" on beat 1 of bar 2, wherein I quickly turn the tone knob down and up after striking the D note that is bent and released one whole step.

In **FIGURE 3**, the line continues with more E blues scale-based phrases, as I ascend from 5th to 7th position, working my way back down to 2nd position in bar 3.

Let's take a look at the toggle switch; with the switch pushed "forward," to position 1 (away from the volume and tone controls), the high end drops out, resulting in a "deep bass," or "dead" tone. With the toggle switch in position 3 (pointing toward the knobs), the tone control is taken out of the circuit, resulting in a very trebly, cutting tone that is a signature of an early '50s Esquire.

This instrument is 71 years old, and, to me, it's just perfect. You can play all kinds of music with an Esquire. It seems that Leo Fender got it right the first time!

FIG. 1 (E7)

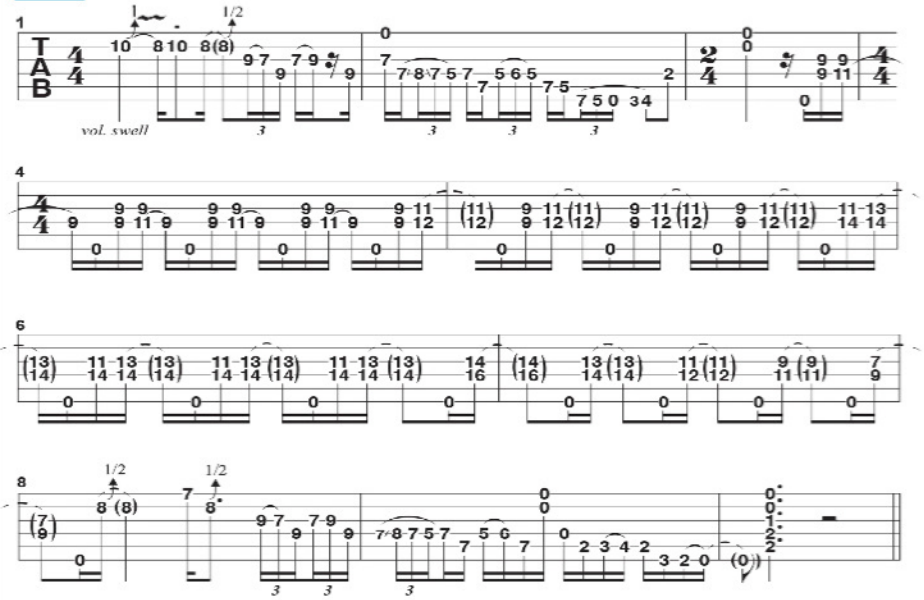


FIG. 2 (E7)

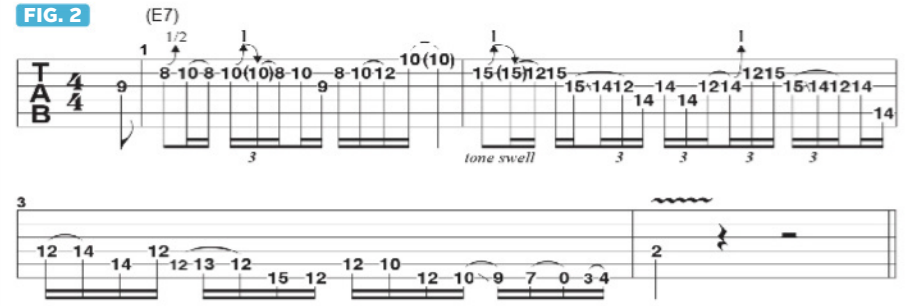
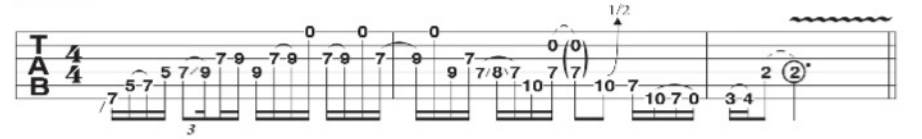


FIG. 3



Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and *de facto* ambassador of the blues.

ELEANOR JANE

MELODIC MUSE

by Andy Timmons

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/june2023

HYBRID VEHICLE, PART 1

How to play "On Your Way Sweet Soul"

THIS MONTH, I'D like to share some of the inner workings of "On Your Way Sweet Soul," which is a tune I wrote and recorded for *Theme from a Perfect World* (2016). The song is based on a relatively simple melodic riff that I perform with hybrid picking, a technique wherein flatpicking is combined with fingerpicking. I was actually not aware at first that I was employing hybrid picking when I played the melody for this song. I realized that, as I played through the line, I was choosing to alternate between sounding notes with the pick and others with my pick-hand fingers. Let's delve into the way I play this melody and examine the advantages of utilizing the hybrid picking technique.

FIGURE 1 illustrates the opening eight-bar theme of "On Your Way Sweet Soul," which is played at a medium tempo and over the chord progression E - C♯m7(9) - A(♯11) - E. The melodic line is based mostly on the E major pentatonic scale (E, F♯, G♯, B, C♯), which becomes C♯ minor pentatonic (C♯, E, F♯, G♯, B) when played over the C♯m7(9) chord. There are a few spots, however, where I bring in additional notes to reference the full E major scale (E, F♯, G♯, A, B, C♯, D♯), bringing the notes A and D♯ into play.

As a rule, the way I use hybrid picking to perform this melody is to strike the lower strings with the pick and fingerpick the adjacent higher strings with my pick-hand middle finger. For example, for the phrases in bars 1-4, the melody is played entirely on the G and B strings; all of the notes on the G string are sounded with the pick, and all of the notes on the B string are sounded with the middle finger.

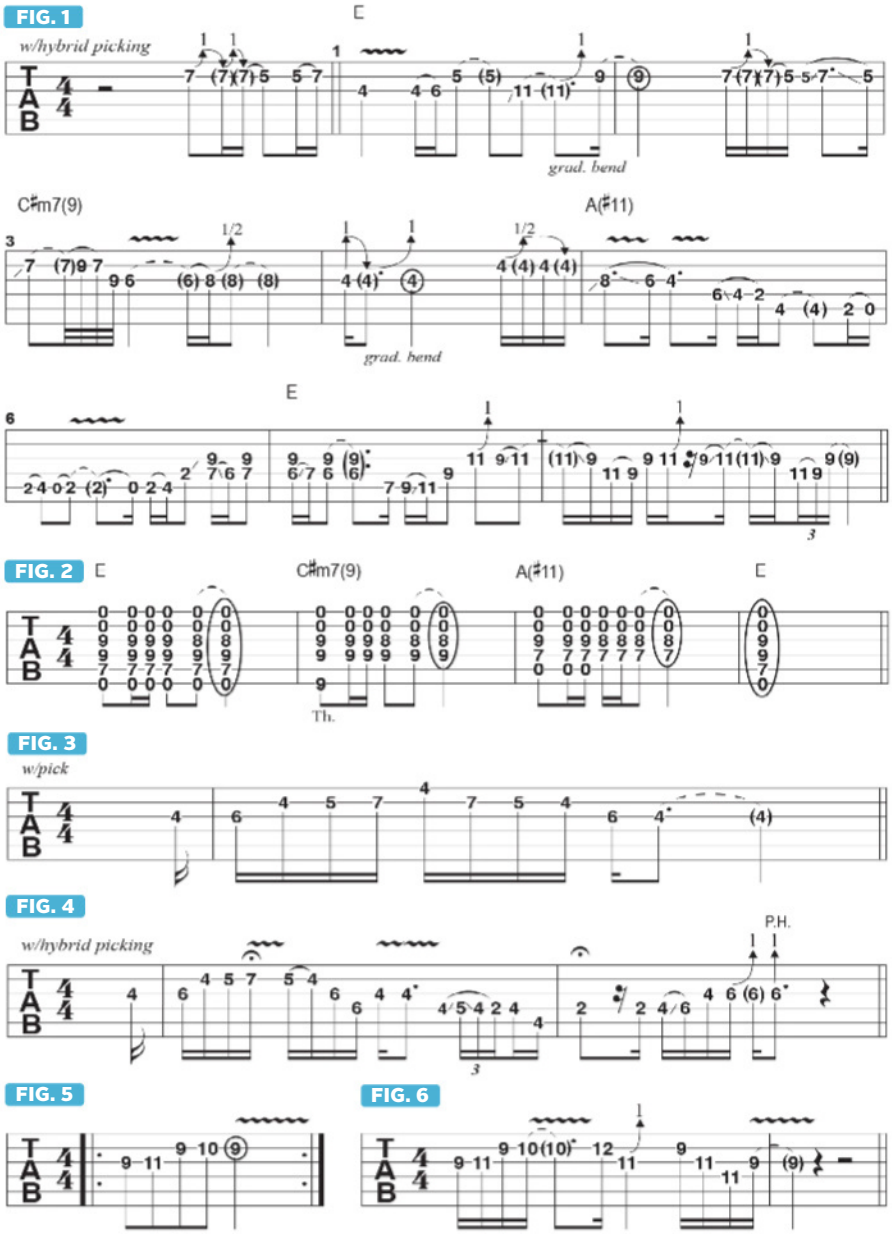
As the melody moves to the lower strings, I apply a similar picking concept: in bar 5 and through the first three and a half beats of bar 6, the notes are all sounded with the pick. When I get down to the A string in bar 6, I then fingerpick the E note on the adjacent D string on the upbeat of beat 3.

For the double-stops played on beat 4 of bar 6 into beats 1 and 2 of bar 7, I pick the D string and fingerpick the G string, and the line culminates with the "adjacent string" rule of lower string = pick, higher string = fingerpick.

FIGURE 2 illustrates the accompanying chords played under the line. Notice the incorporation of the open top two strings, which add resonance and shimmer to all of the chord voicings.

In **FIGURE 3**, I play a line based on the E major scale using the pick only, which yields a very specific sound. Hybrid picking allows the opportunity for a greater variety of dynamics and tonal range, as shown with the hybrid-picked line in **FIGURE 4**. How light or how hard you strike a string will make a big difference in the character and emotional expression of each note you play.

A good way to practice hybrid picking is to play a scale-based line, as demonstrated in **FIGURES 5** and **6**. As you play, listen to all of the overtones that appear when using the flesh of the finger to pick the strings.



Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. His latest album, *Electric Truth*, is out now.

SIMONE CECHETTI

LIVE FROM FLAT V

by Josh Smith

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/june2023

SOLO EXPANSIONS, PART 1

Using chromatic approaches to expand your blues soloing vocabulary

OVER THE NEXT few columns, I'd like to demonstrate three distinct approaches I like to take to expand my soloing vocabulary within the blues form: chromaticism, diminished/augmented chords, and ii - V - I (two-five-one) turnarounds. These are some specific devices I use to build musical bridges between chords while moving through a blues chord progression.

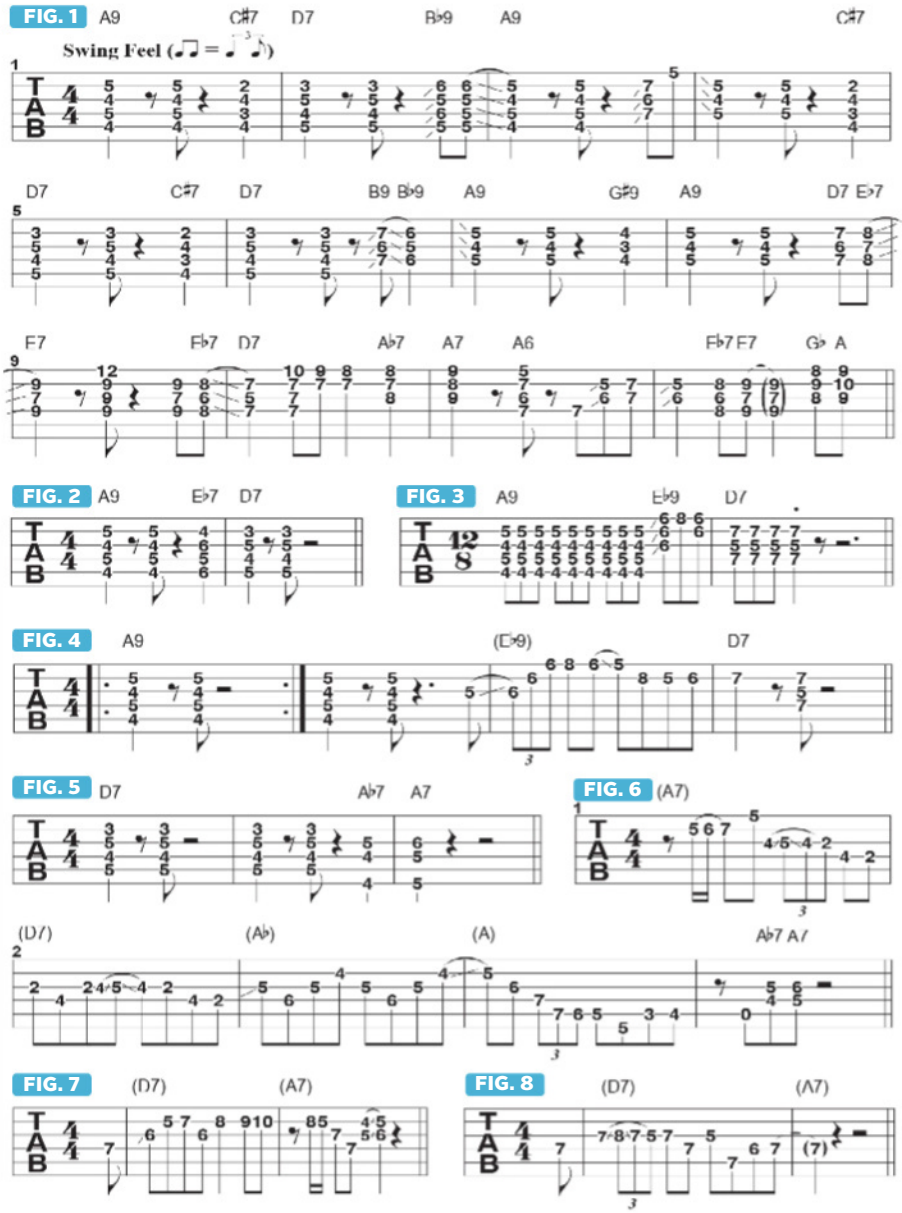
To me, referencing, or outlining, the chord changes with single-note lines presents a more harmonically interesting approach than just playing pentatonic licks or notes that "agree with" a specific chord. Connecting the chords with a single-note melody is commonly referred to as "playing through the changes."

Let's begin our investigation with chromaticism — notes or chords played half steps apart. In **FIGURE 1**, I demonstrate a 12-bar blues in the key of A, with the I (one) chord being A9, the IV (four) chord being D7 and the V (five) chord being E7. Throughout the figure, I use chromaticism to approach each of these primary chords from either a half step below or above. In order to set up the IV chord, D7, that falls on beat 1 of bar 2, I first play its lower chromatic neighbor chord, C♯7, at the end of bar 1. At the end of bar 2, I approach the A9 chord that falls on beat 1 of bar 3 from its upper neighbor, B♭9. This approach is repeated in bars 4-6.

At the end of bar 7, I use the lower-neighbor approach again and play G♯9 to set up the A9 chord in bar 8. And in bars 8, 9 and 12, E♭7 is used as a descending chromatic passing chord between E7 and D7.

When you begin to hear those "in between" chords, you'll naturally want to allude to them with your single-note lines. It's a great exercise to play rhythm guitar in this way, adding as much chromatic motion as you can, because your ear will become trained to hearing the "transition" chords as you improvise.

Okay, so how do we start applying this approach to soloing? Let's take the first



move in a 12-bar blues, which is the I chord, A9 in this case, moving to the IV, D7. In **FIGURE 2**, I approach the D7 chord on beat 1 of bar 2 with E♭7 (its upper neighbor) on beat 4 of bar 1.

Let's apply this to a slow blues. In **FIGURE 3**, which is played in $\frac{12}{8}$ meter, I set up D7 by sliding up to a partial E♭9 chord and adding one melodic tone, C. **FIGURE 4** shows how to apply this approach within a shuffle, notated in $\frac{4}{4}$. At the end of bar 3, I slide from C to C♯ on the 3rd string, followed by F and B♭, on the 2nd and 1st strings, respectively, melodically outlining E♭9. I then end the phrase with a chromatic "walk-up" to F♯, the 3rd of D7.

Continuing this approach for the IV chord, D7, back to the I, A7, **FIGURES 5-8** illustrate four different ways to reference chromatic movement. Now that you have the concept, try applying it to the last three chords in the progression — E7 to D7 to A7.

Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-around tone wizard. His new album, 2022's *Bird of Passage*, is out now.

OLLY CURTIS/FUTURE

"AT LONG LAST, I HAVE MY
ULTIMATE
DUAL
ECHO
IN A SINGLE PEDAL!"
- ANDY TIMMONS
TIME
LEVEL
FDBK
(PRESS)
RATE
TONE
DEPTH
RHYTHM
HALO
ANDY TIMMONS
DUAL ECHO
PRESETS
1 2 3
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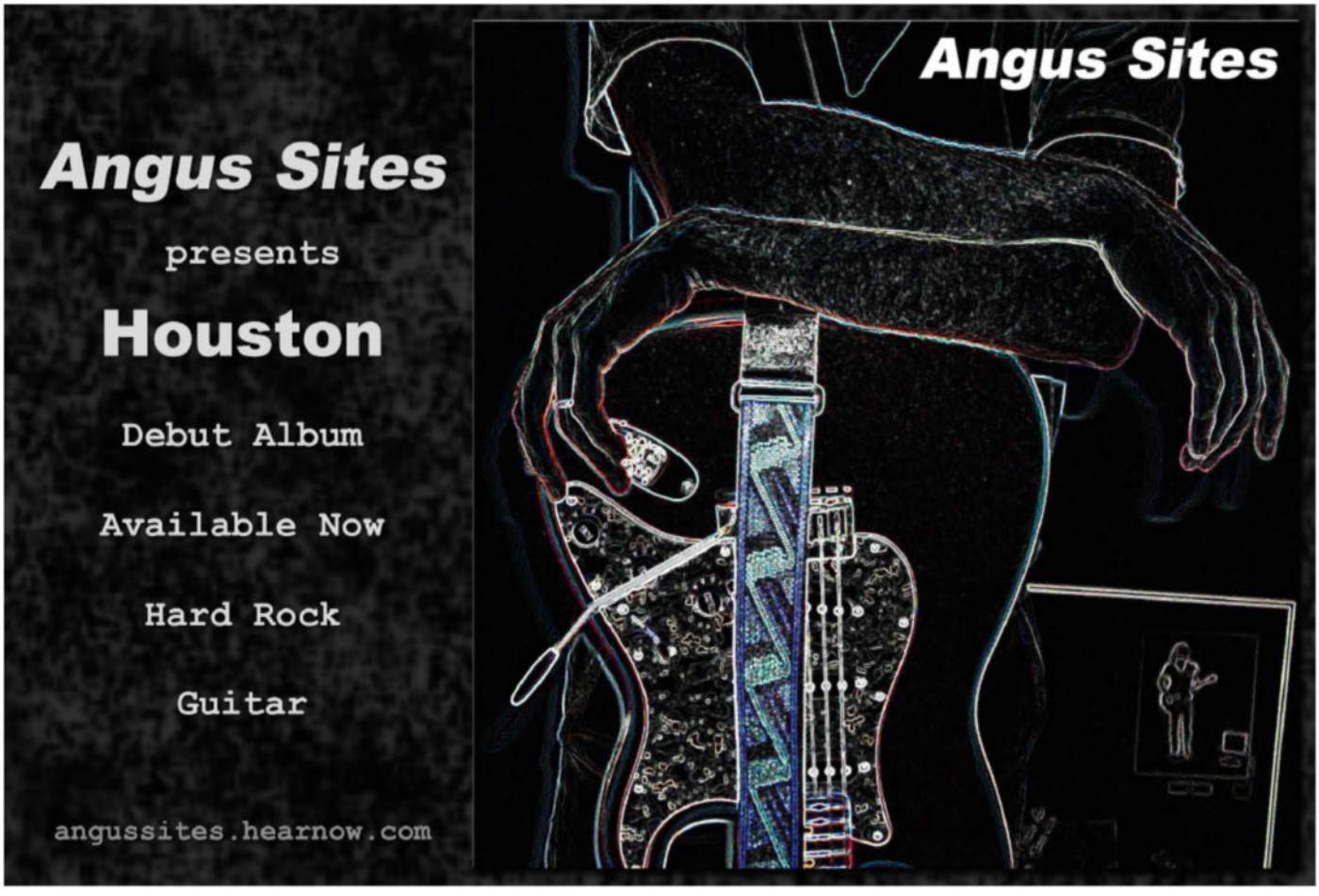
SCAN HERE
TO LEARN MORE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Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS **By Jimmy Brown**

"THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER"
Chris Stapleton

THIS TENDER PERFORMANCE of America's national anthem by Chris Stapleton at Super Bowl LVII features the talented singer-songwriter softly accompanying his soulful, powerful vocal with a minimalist but tasteful and highly effective guitar arrangement. Stapleton foregoes many of the song's traditional chord changes and $\frac{3}{4}$ meter in favor of a more meditative approach, reworked in $\frac{4}{4}$ with a droning, simplified accompaniment, which he plays fingerstyle in drop-D tuning, transposed down a half step, ("drop-C♯"). The guitarist enriches the ethereal vibe of his stripped-down part by dialing in a warm, clean tone with his Fender Telecaster's neck pickup and Princeton amp and enhancing it with subtle tremolo and phaser effects.

Technically, there's really not much to be concerned about in this transcribed performance, as it's built around a handful of easily formed chord shapes. And while it's not a stand-alone, chord/melody-style solo guitar arrangement, it does offer a coolly understated and satisfying way to accompany yourself or someone else singing the song, without having to navigate numerous complex, classical-style chord changes. You can find those in the two instrumental arrangements of the song I presented in the August and September 2018 issues.

It's interesting how Stapleton instantly establishes a dreamy mood and purposefully sets up his vocal entrance in bar 1 with a rich-sounding, arpeggiated Dadd4 chord, with its open G note ringing with and rubbing against the fretted F♯. In bars 2 and 3, the guitarist departs from the song's original progression by simply hanging on the I (one) chord, D, decorating his drone-y accompaniment with bluesy finger slides from the minor 3rd, F, up to the major 3rd, F♯. Equally cool is Stapleton's use of grace-note hammer-ons on the A5 chords and his substitution of B5 for D in bars 8, 16, 22 and 24, which conveys a dramatically darker-sounding relative minor chord (implying Bm), as opposed to the brighter, happier D major sound. And the final cadence — G5 - F5 - Dadd4 — is a hauntingly beautiful twist.

"EVERYBODY USE YOUR GODDAMN TURN SIGNAL"
Paul Gilbert

GUITAR GOD PAUL Gilbert is widely admired not only for his fluid, virtuosic shredding and technical expertise, but also for his talents as a songwriter, judicious application of chops and wonderful sense of humor, which comes across in both his writing and his playful lead work. This song embodies all of these elements and showcases the guitarist's melodicism and knack for crafting cool, catchy riffs and hooks.

Paul introduces the song with a repeating, grooving single-note riff in an implied F♯ minor tonality, adding bends to his held notes, which lend the phrase a sassy rock and roll attitude. The mood is further enhanced by a swing-16ths feel, which gives the riff added bounce.

As the first verse commences at section B (bar 8), Gilbert momentarily breaks things down by picking percussive "dead" notes on the top two strings in a steady eighth-note rhythm, cleverly mimicking the sound of an automobile's turn signal. Indicated by X's, these pitchless notes are sounded by picking the strings while lightly resting three or four fret-hand fingers on them, without pushing them down to touch the frets.

Gilbert plays several fiery solos throughout the song, all of which feature his signature melodic shredding and colorful note choices. Notice how he combines notes from the dark- and tough-sounding F♯ blues scale (F♯, A, B, C, C♯, E) with the warmer sounds of F♯ Mixolydian (F♯, G♯, A♯, B, C♯, D♯, E), creating rolling chromatic juxtapositions that smoothly blend major and minor sounds. Gilbert has large hands and will often exploit his exceptional reach to perform face-melting licks that span up to seven frets on a single string (!), as he does in bars 15, 32 and 52. When playing these licks, make sure your fret hand is warmed up, and rotate your wrist as needed to make the stretches. Fortunately, the notes are high up on the neck, where the frets are closer together.

To perform the bend with the trill in bar 23, reach your pick hand over to the fretboard and pull the B string up toward the lower strings, using two or three fingers.

"OUTSHINED"
Soundgarden

SOUNDGARDEN'S BREAKOUT SONG from 1991, this rock radio hit helped popularize the burgeoning grunge style and frontman Chris Cornell's unique, original songwriting approach, featuring angular, quirky guitar riffs and the use of an unusual odd meter and unorthodox chord voicings and changes.

Performed in drop-D tuning and incorporating the convenient use of one-finger barre chord shapes on the bottom two strings, the song kicks off with a brooding, Black Sabbath-like power chord riff that's based on the D blues scale (D, F, G, A♭, A, C) and played in $\frac{7}{4}$ meter, which may be best thought of as a bar of $\frac{4}{4}$ followed by a bar of $\frac{3}{4}$. Count "one an', two an', three an', four an', one an', two an', three an,'" as opposed to "one an', two an', three an', four an', five an', six an', sev' an'." Or, you could do what Cornell and his bandmates did and just play the riff by ear.

The song's pre-chorus (section C) features an interesting harmonic twist, as the dark power chord progression of the intro and verse riff suddenly gives way to richer and brighter colors, with major and major 7 chords (D and Gmaj7) and the use of an inversion — D/F♯, which has the 3rd in the bass — and open minor 6th and octave intervals. It's interesting to note the use of a Dm chord at the end of the repeating two-bar progression, which casts a brief moment of darkness upon an otherwise bright, warm-sounding chord sequence.

In characteristic fashion, lead guitarist Kim Thayil contributes tasteful complimentary fills and a well-crafted solo to this song, often using Cornell's vocal melody as a phrasing springboard. Thayil's distinctive touch is especially evident in his string bends and vibratos, such as those he performs during the song's interlude/solo section (see rehearsal letter E, bars 23-26). Notice the guitarist's unexpected note choices here. Instead of basing his licks on the D blues scale, which would perfectly match the underlying verse riff (see *Rhy. Fig. 1*), he instead plays notes from the warmer sounding D Mixolydian mode (D, E, F♯, G, A, B, C), creating some interesting dissonances.

KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES FOR ROC NATION

"THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER" (LIVE AT SUPER BOWL LVII)

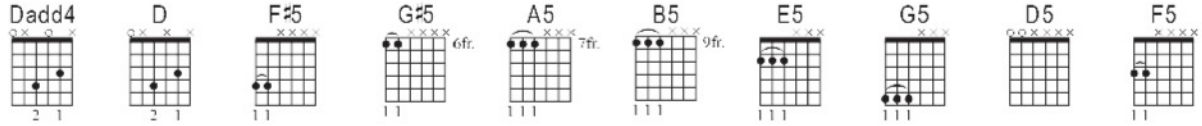
Chris Stapleton

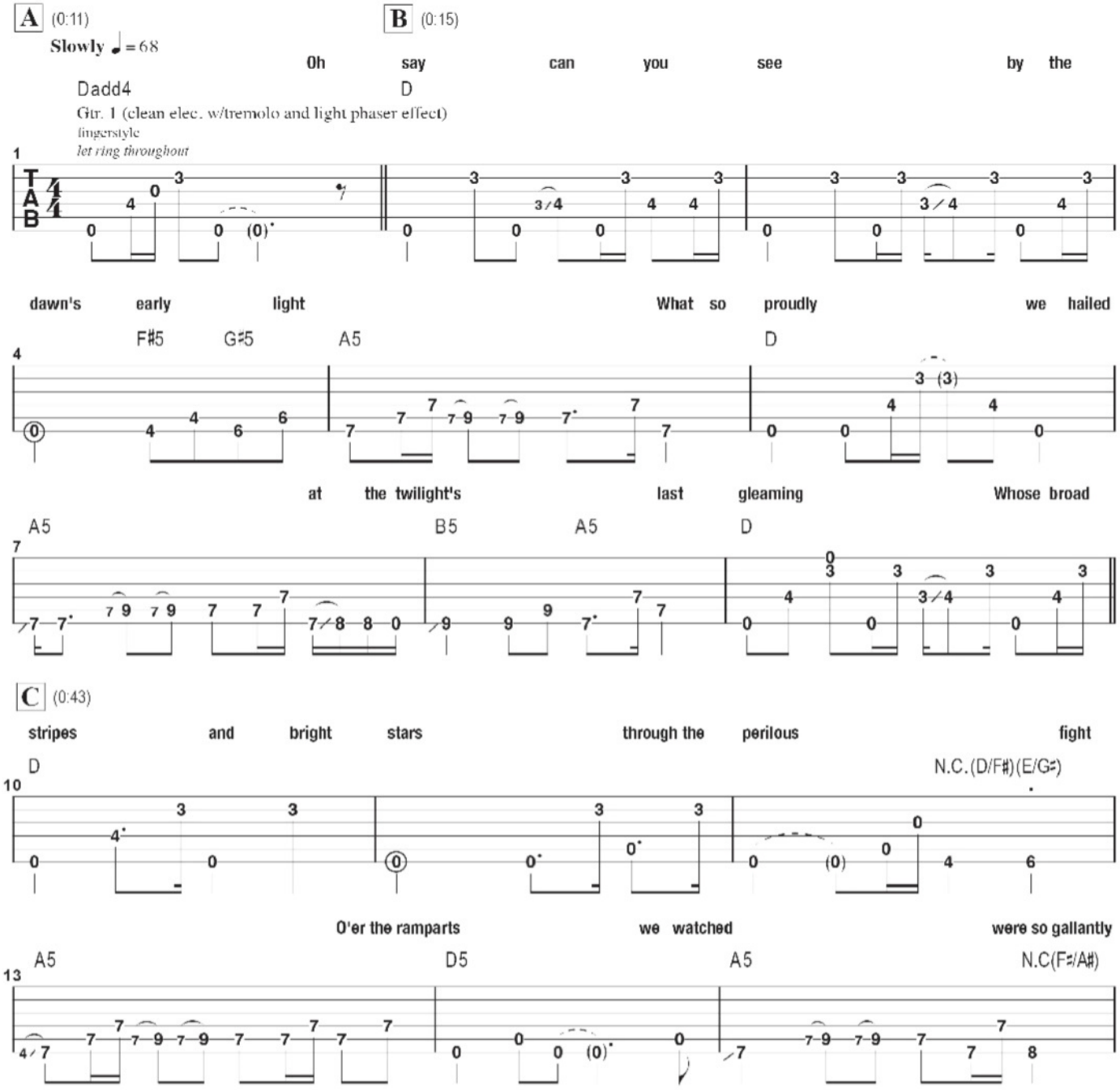
As heard on **YOUTUBE**

Words by FRANCIS SCOTT KEY • *Music by* JOHN STAFFORD SMITH • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

Guitar is in drop-D tuning, tuned down one half step (low to high: C♯, G♯, C♯, F♯, A♯, C♯).

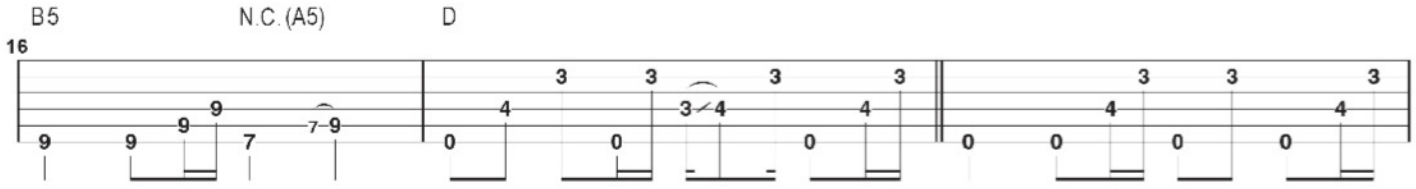
All music sounds in the key of C♯, one half step lower than written.



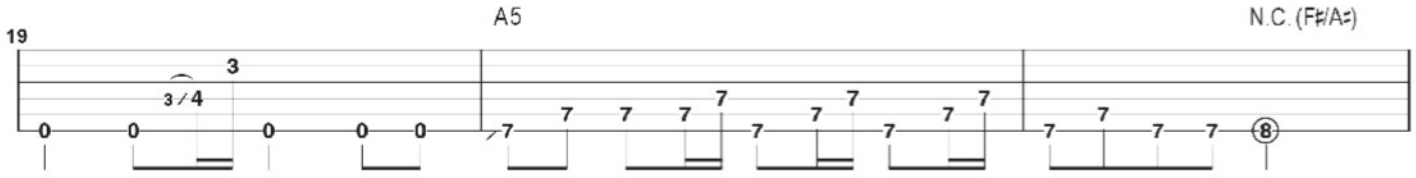


D (1:11)

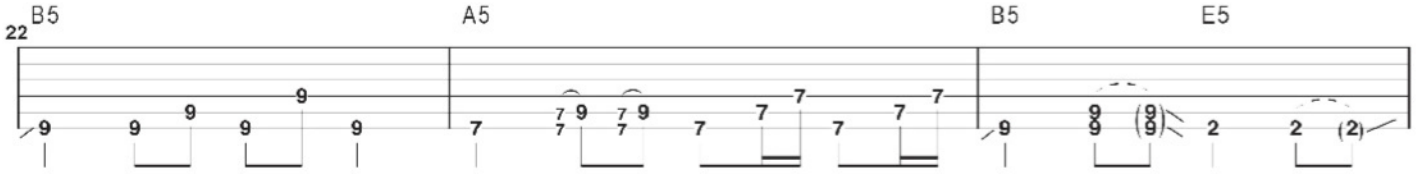
streaming And the rocket's red glare



the bomb's bursting in air Gave proof

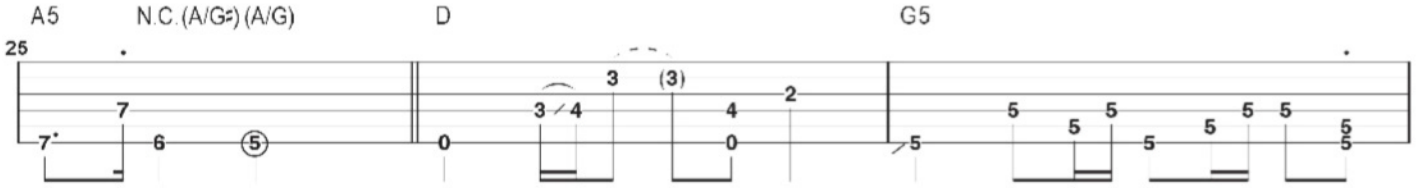


through the night that our flag was still



E (1:39)

there Oh say does that star - spangled

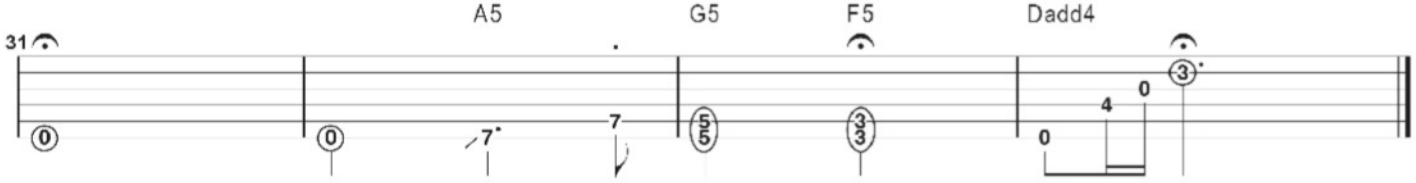


(grad. decrease tempo) (resume orig. tempo)

banner yet wave O'er the land of the

(grad. decrease tempo) Freely

free and the home of the brave

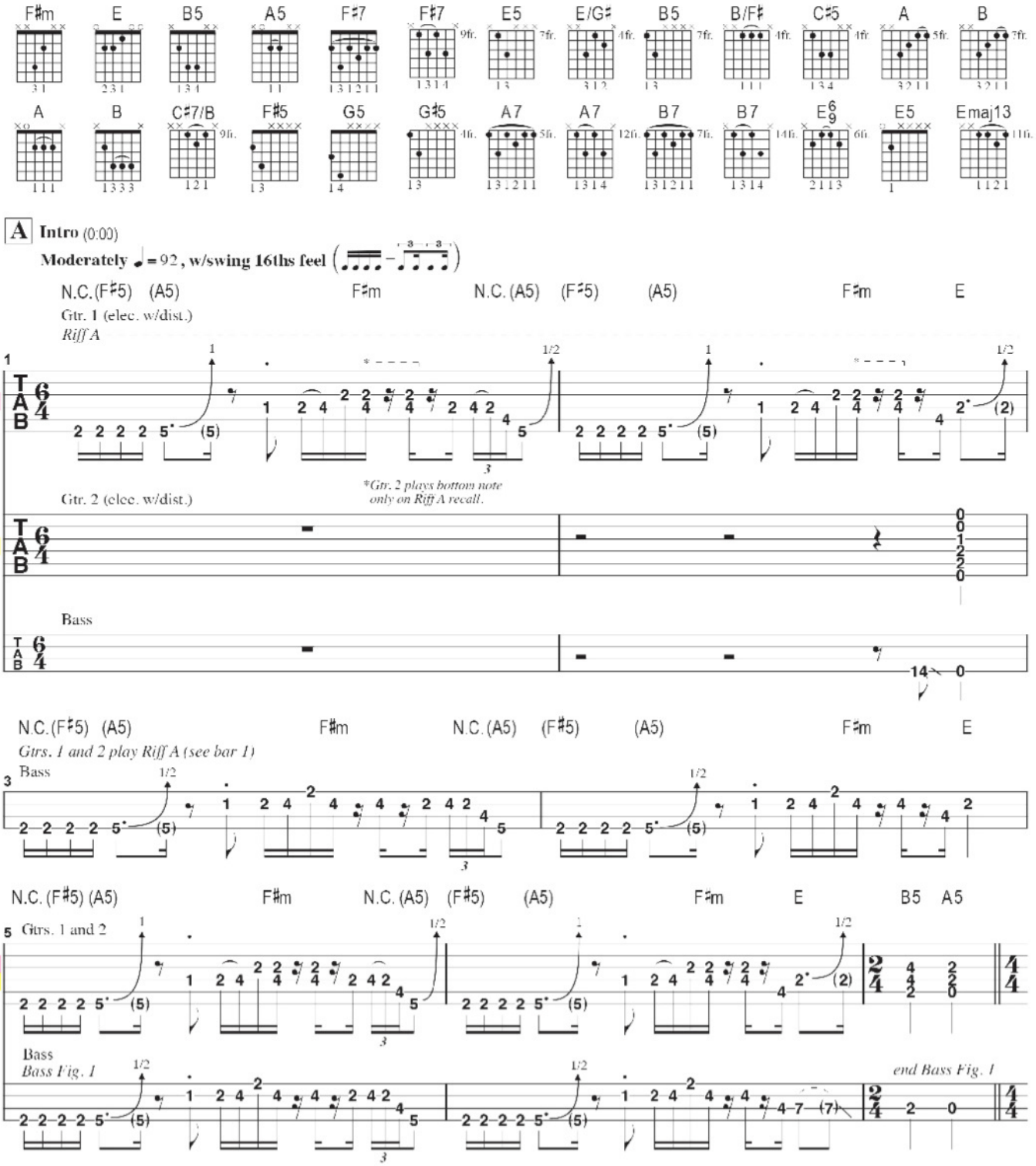


"EVERYBODY USE YOUR GODDAMN TURN SIGNAL"

Paul Gilbert

As heard on **I CAN DESTROY**

Written by **PAUL GILBERT** • *Transcribed by* **JEFF PERRIN**



"EVERYBODY USE YOUR GODDAMN TURN SIGNAL"
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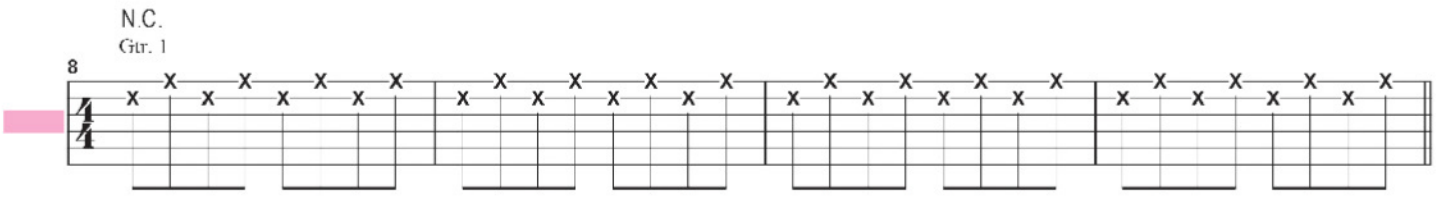
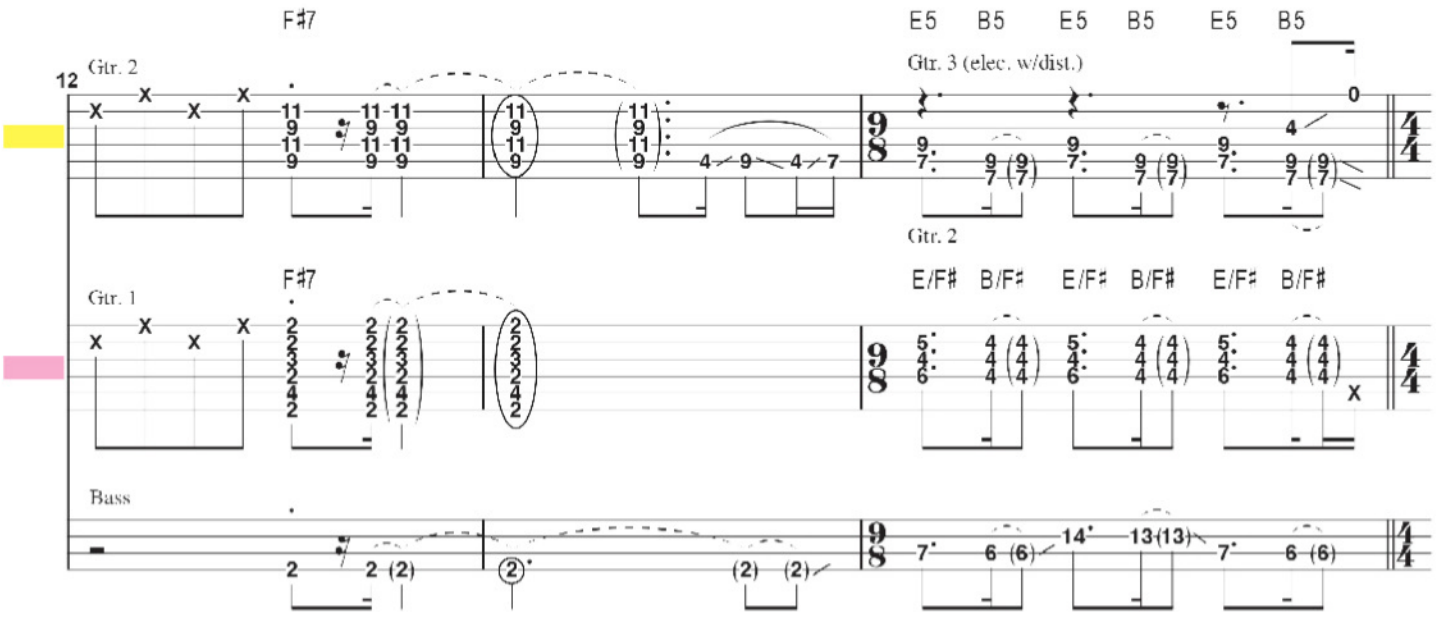
B **1st Verse** (0:25)

Everybody use your eyes Look at this beautiful day Everybody use your ears Listen to me when I say now

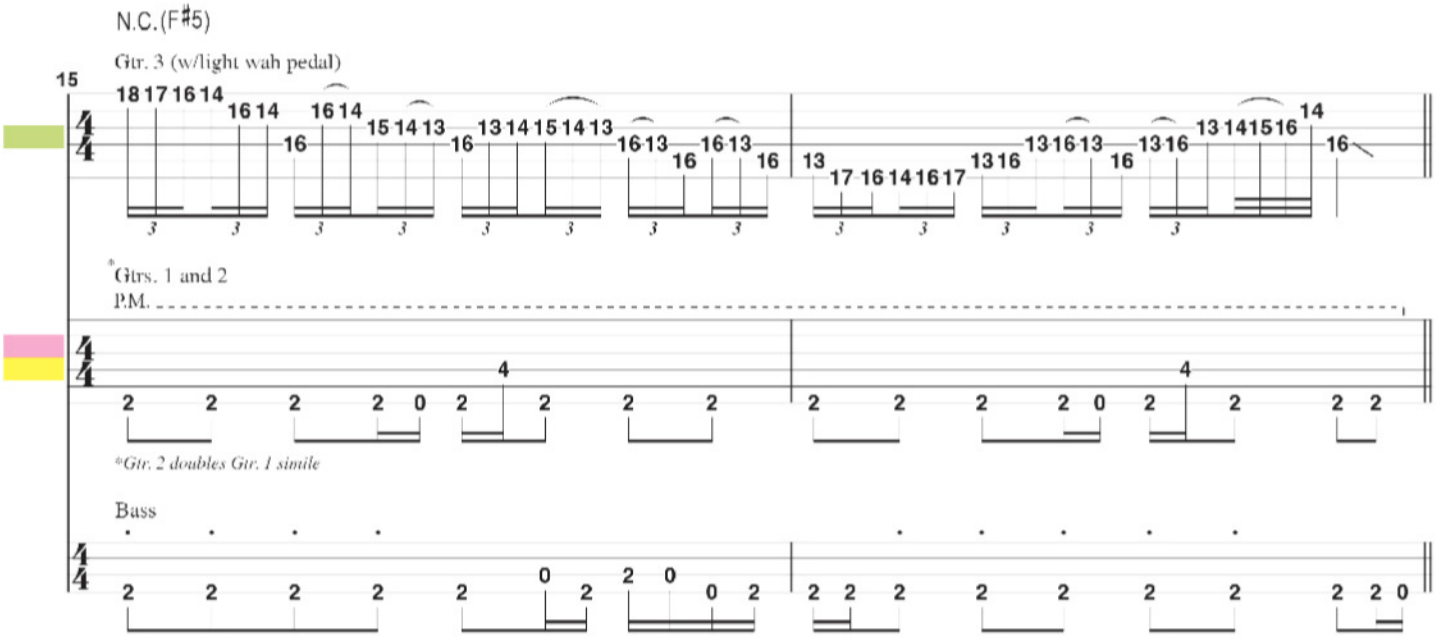


C **1st Chorus** (0:35)

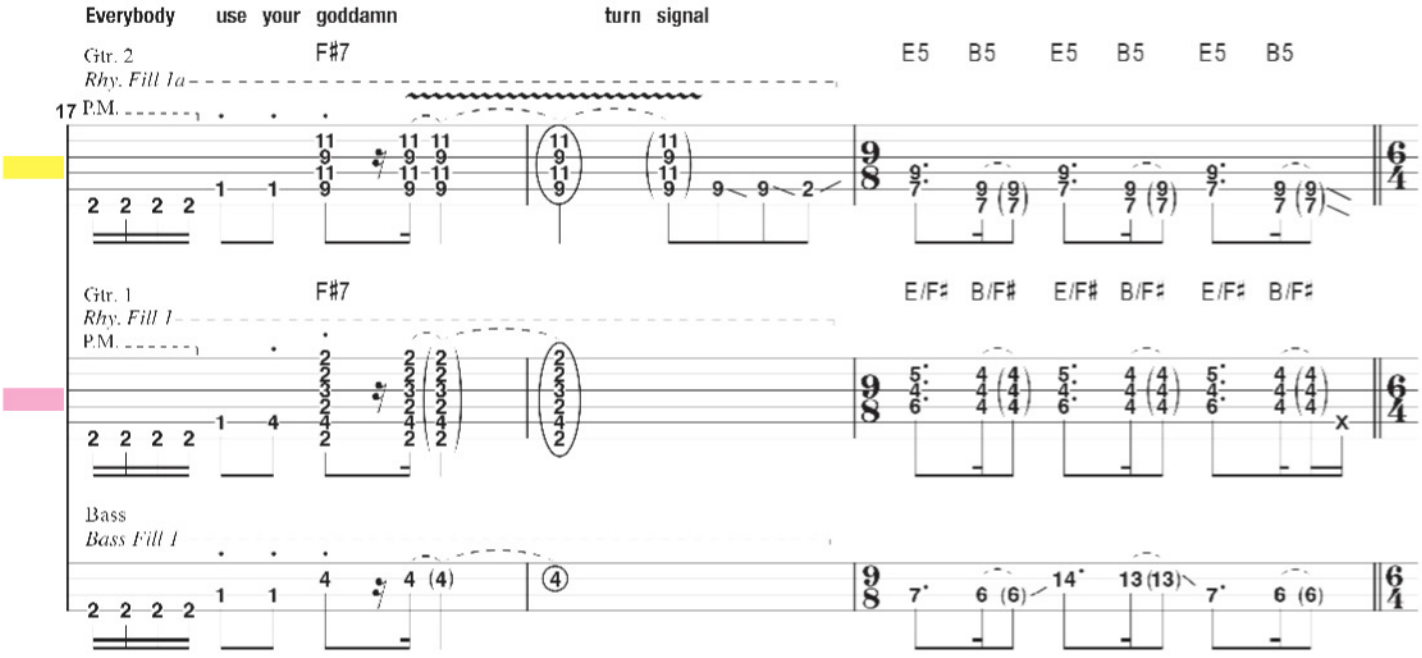
Everybody use your goddamn turn signal



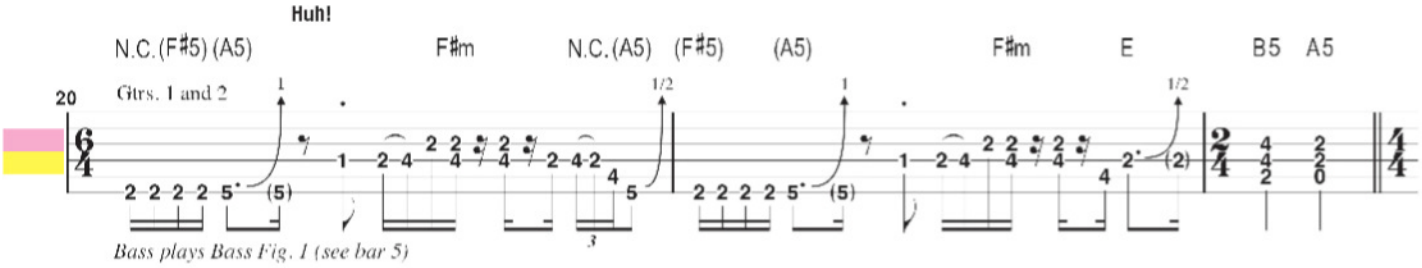
D **1st Solo Break** (0:43)



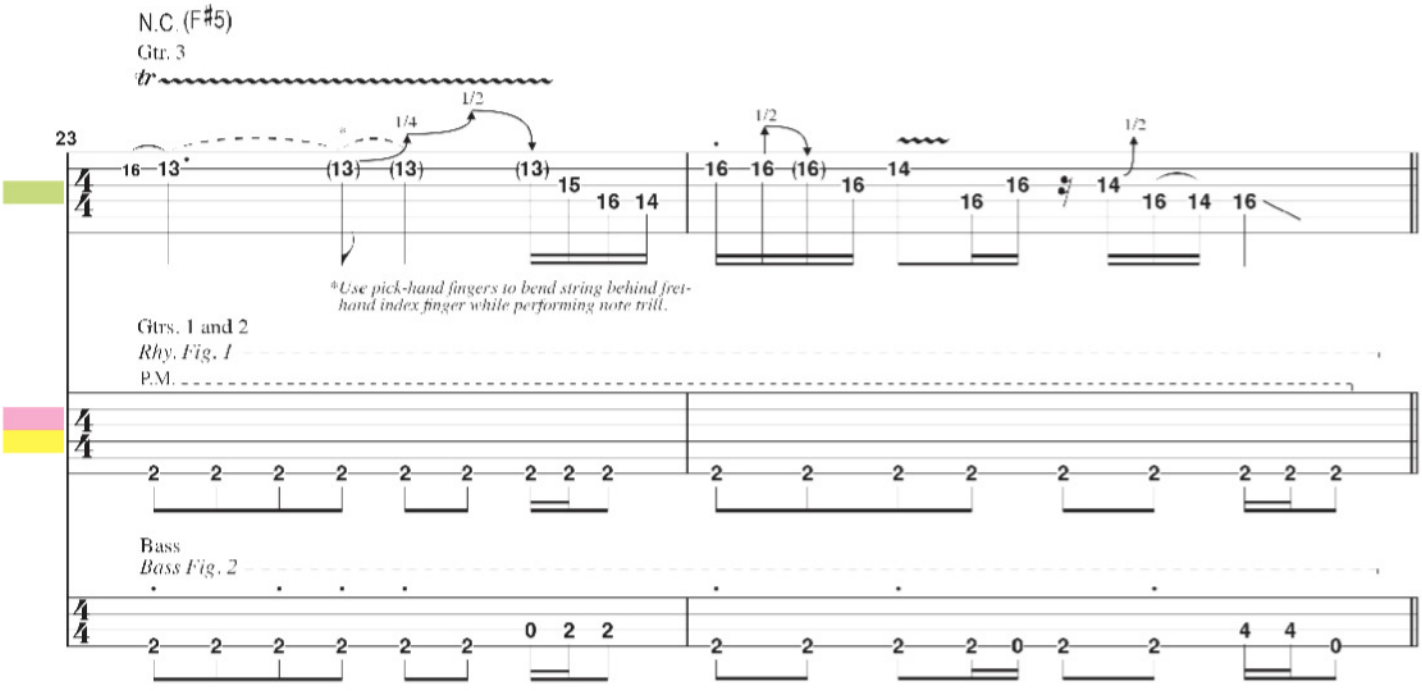
E **2nd Chorus** (0:48)



F (0:57)



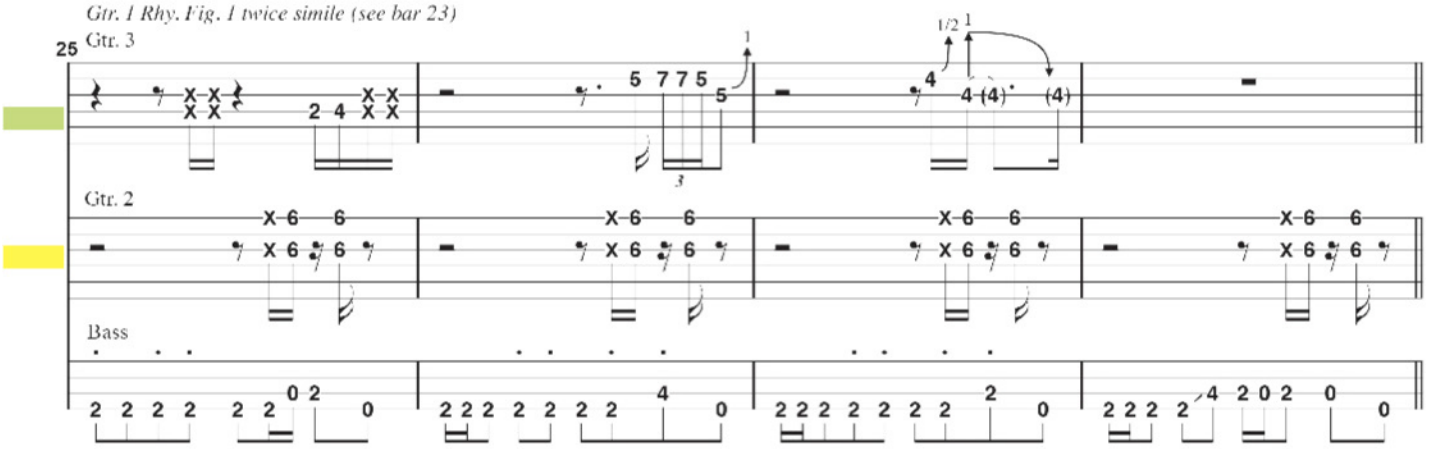
G **2nd Solo Break** (1:06)



H **2nd Verse** (1:11)

Everybody use your mind Try to find out what's real Everybody use your heart to tell a girl how you feel now

Gtr. 1 Rhy. Fig. 1 twice simile (see bar 23)



I **3rd and 4th Choruses** (1:21, 1:35)

2nd time, skip ahead to K *(bar 34)*

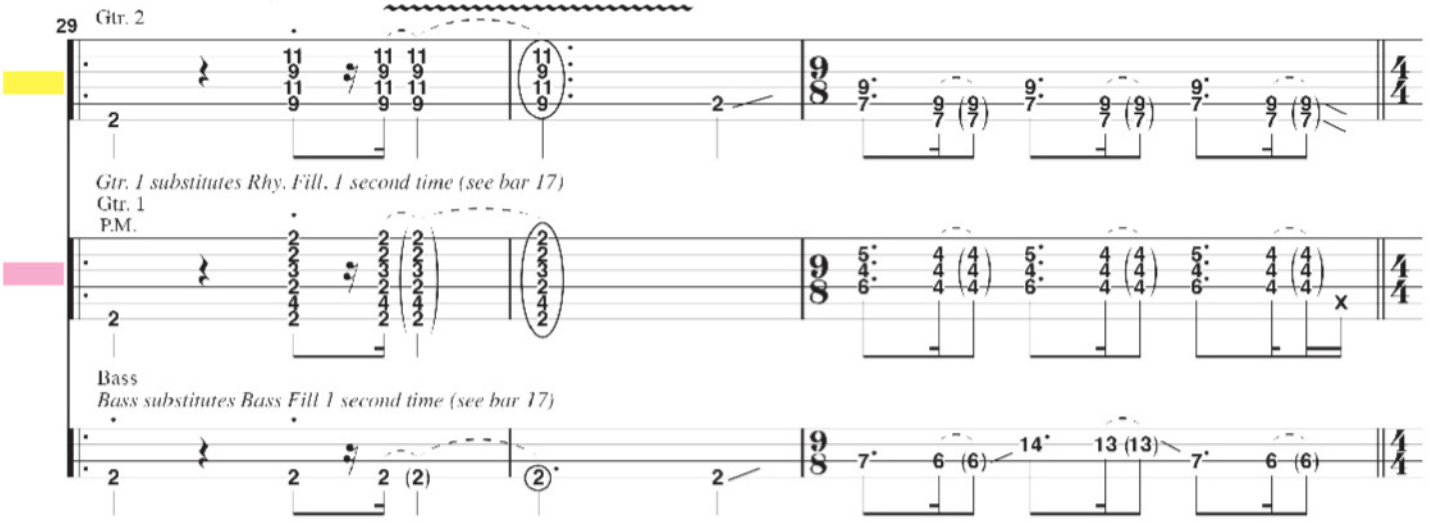
Everybody use your goddamn turn signal

F♯7 E5 B5 E5 B5 E5 B5

Gtr. 2 substitutes Rhy. Fill. 1a second time (see bar 17)

Gtr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fill. 1 second time (see bar 17)

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 1 second time (see bar 17)



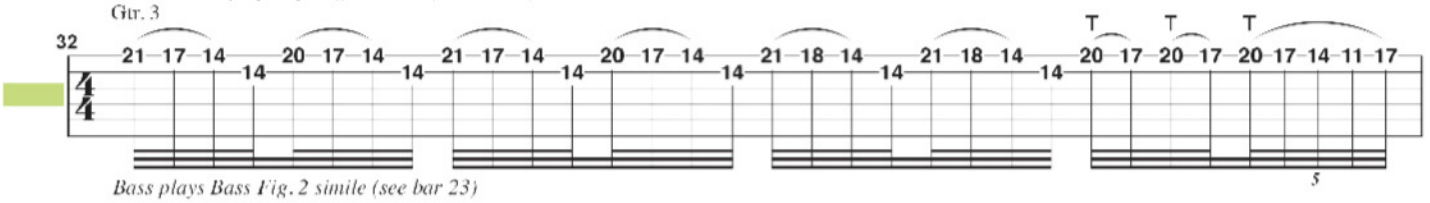
1.

J **3rd Solo Break** (1:29)

N.C. (F♯5)

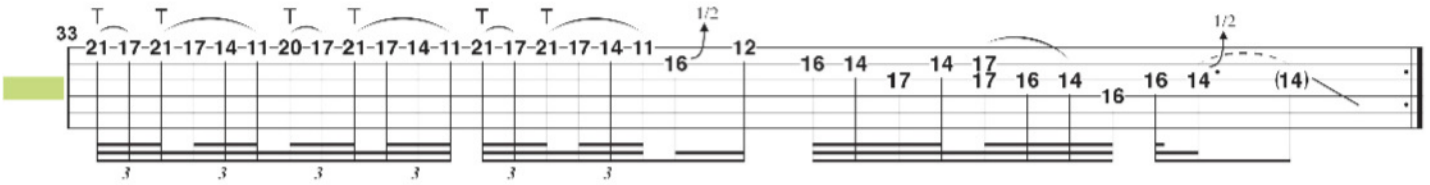
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 simile (see bar 23)

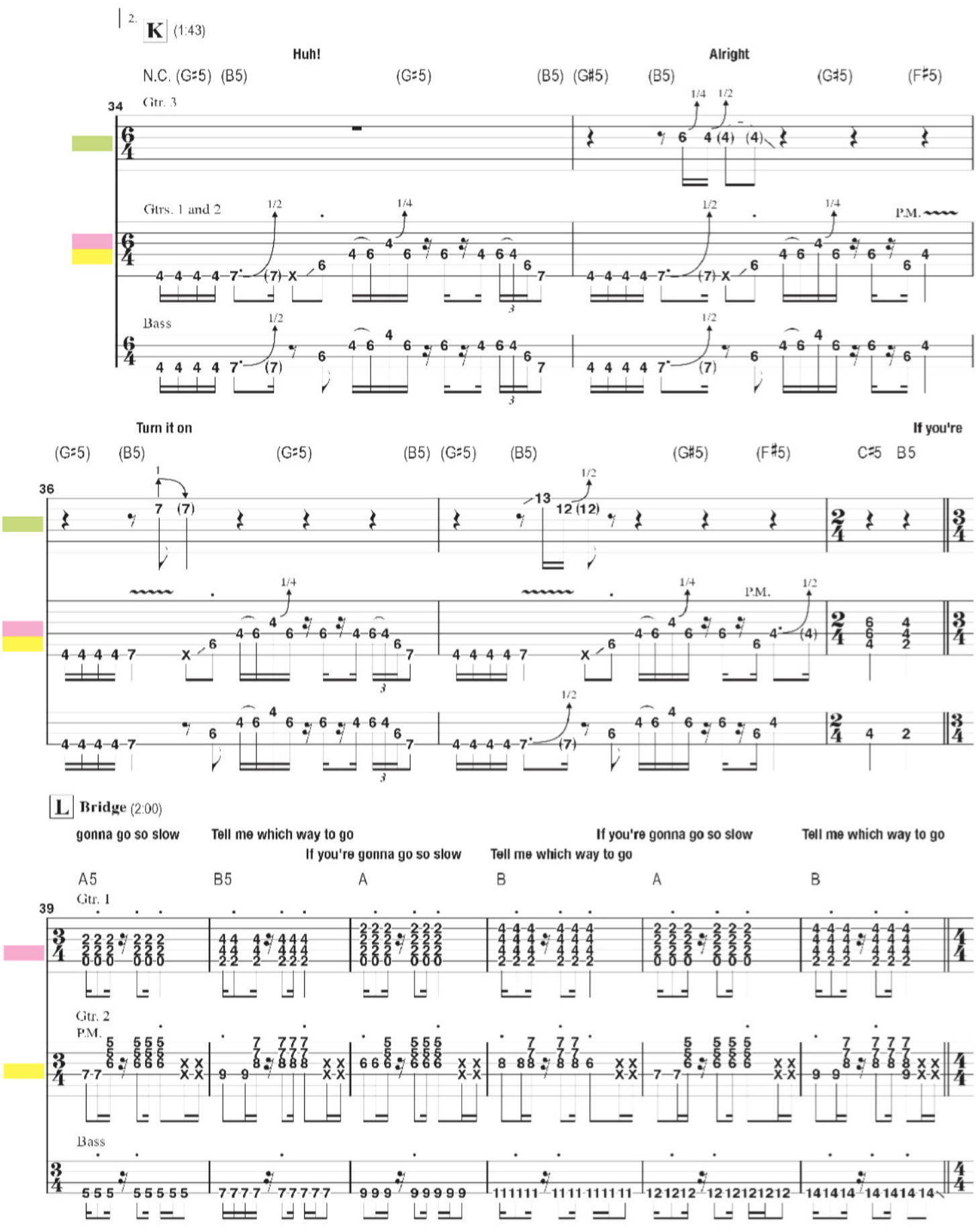
Gtr. 3

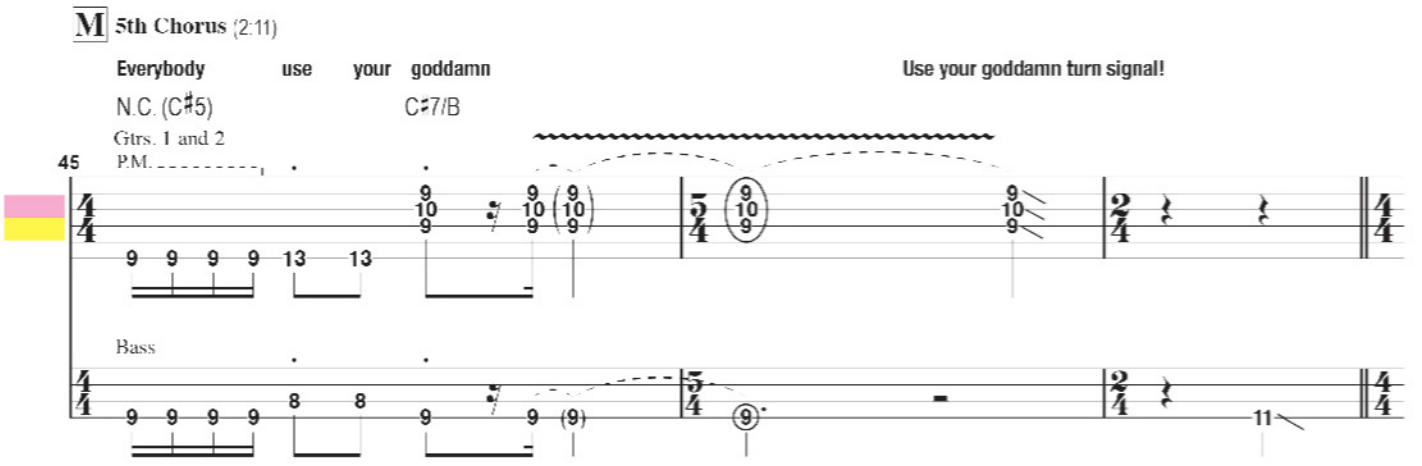


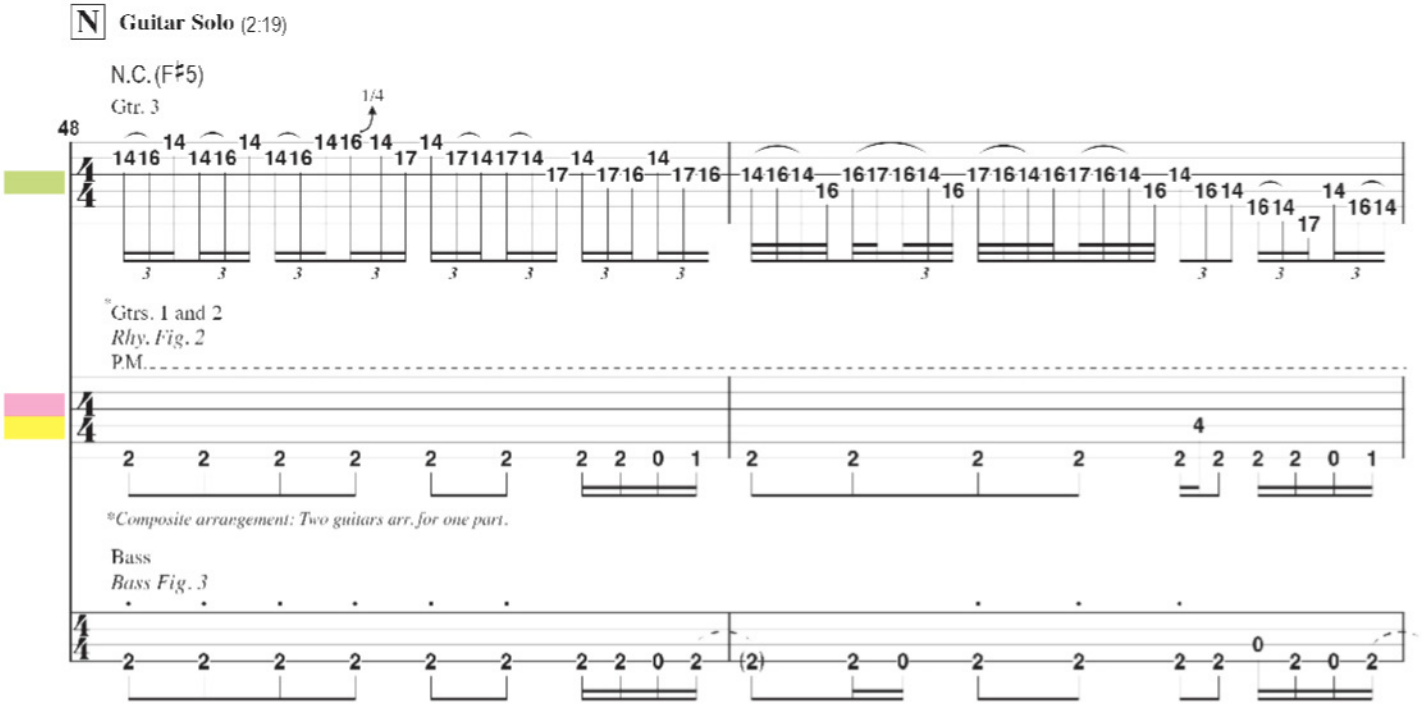
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 23)

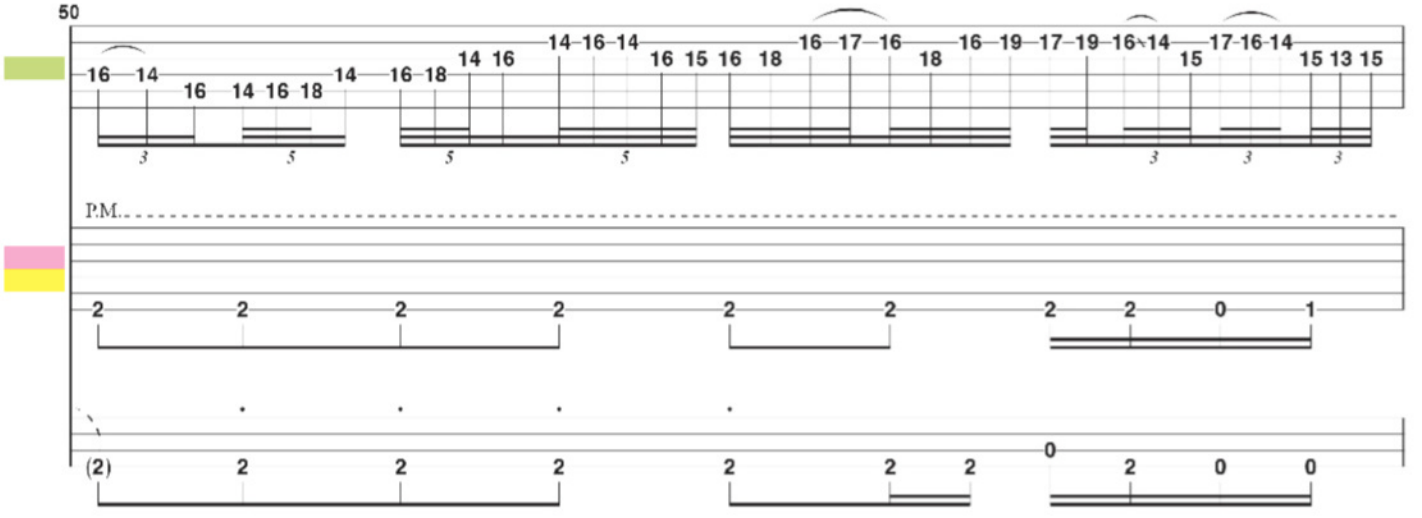
Go back to I *4th Chorus (bar 29)*

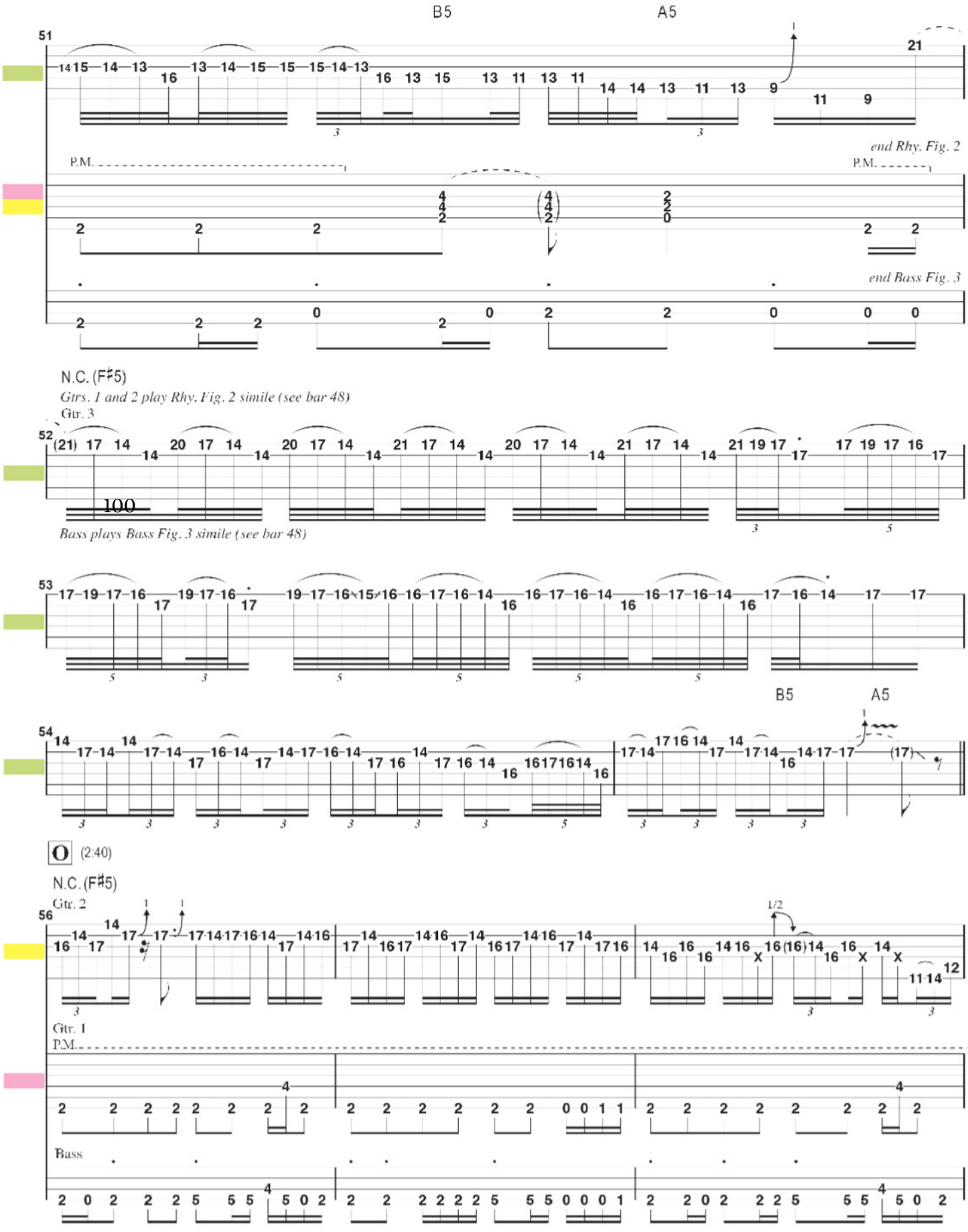


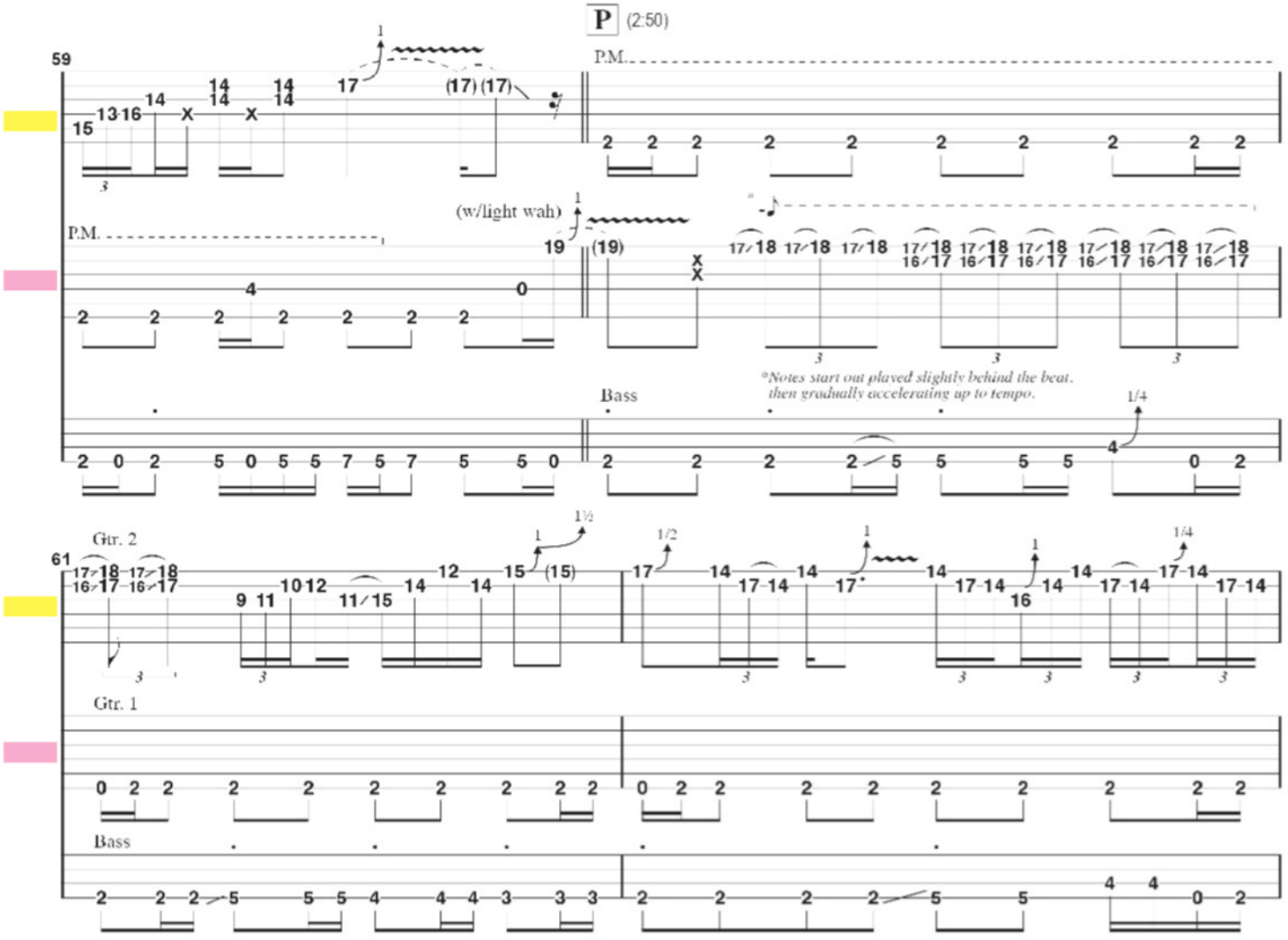

2.
K (1:43)
Huh!
Alright
N.C. (G♯5) (B5)
(G♯5)
(B5) (G♯5)
(B5)
(G♯5)
(F♯5)
34
Gtr. 3
Gtrs. 1 and 2
Bass
P.M.
Turn it on
If you're
(G♯5) (B5)
(G♯5)
(B5) (G♯5)
(B5)
(G♯5)
(F♯5)
C♯5 B5
36
L Bridge (2:00)
gonna go so slow
Tell me which way to go
If you're gonna go so slow
Tell me which way to go
If you're gonna go so slow
Tell me which way to go
A5
B5
A
B
A
B
39
Gtr. 1
Gtr. 2
P.M.
Bass

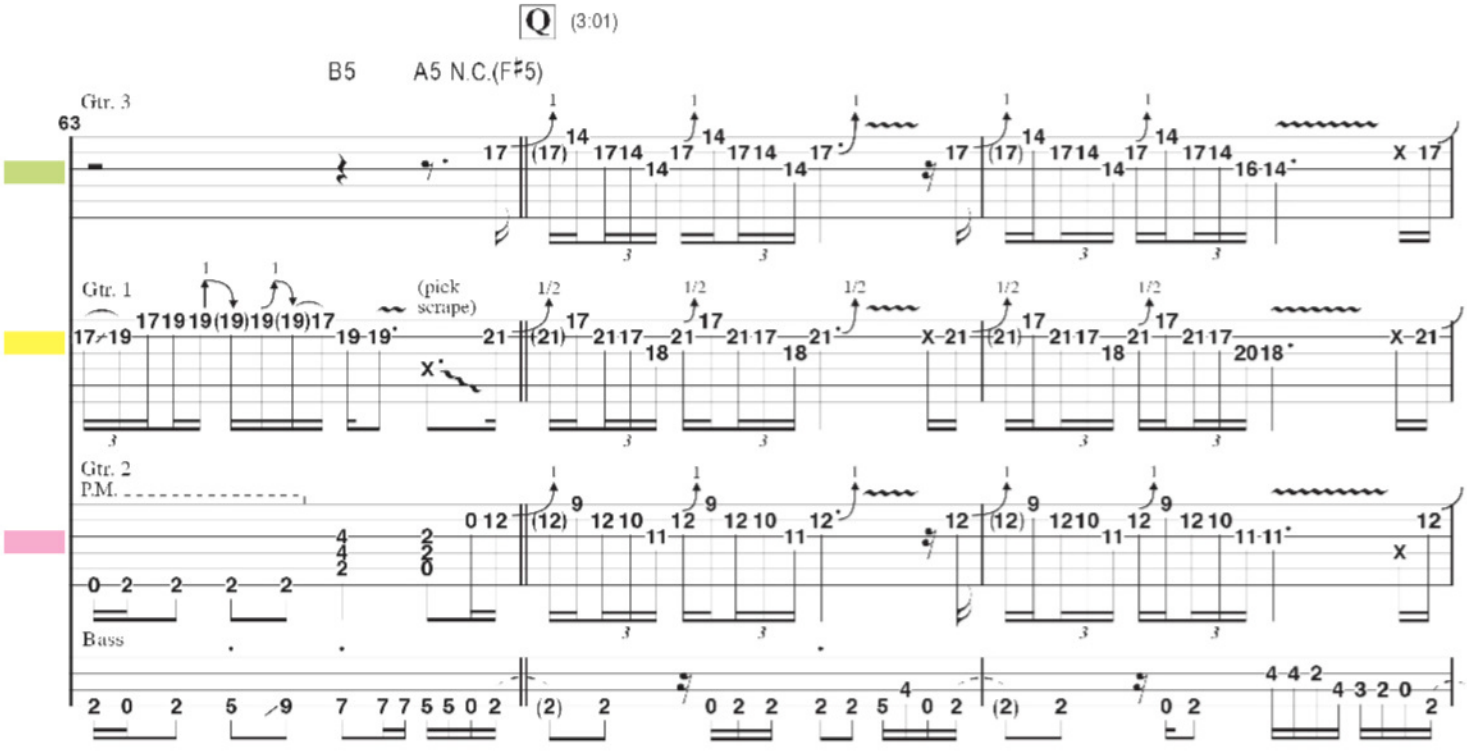

M 5th Chorus (2:11)
Everybody use your goddamn
Use your goddamn turn signal!
N.C. (C♯5)
C♯7/B
Gtrs. 1 and 2
P.M.
45
Bass

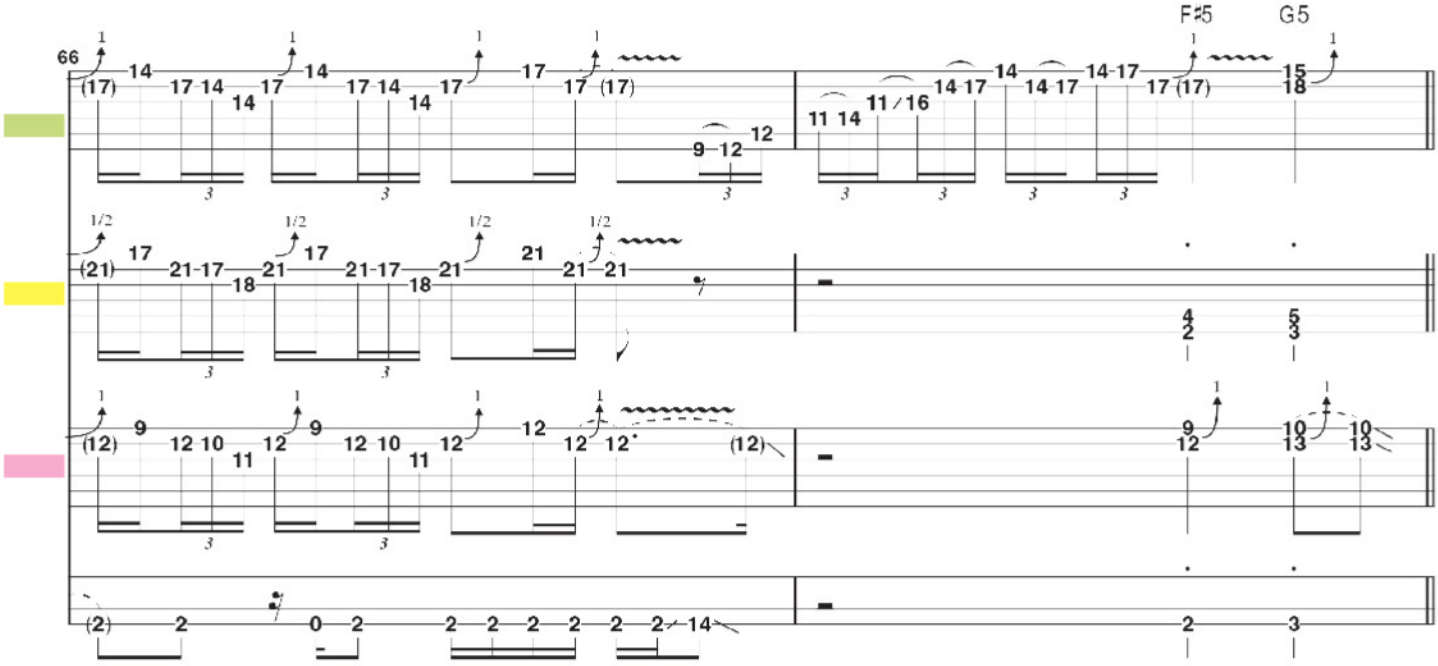

N Guitar Solo (2:19)
N.C. (F♯5)
Gtr. 3
1/4
48
Gtrs. 1 and 2
Rhy. Fig. 2
P.M.
*Composite arrangement: Two guitars arr. for one part.
Bass
Bass Fig. 3


50
P.M.


B5
A5
51
P.M.
end Rhy. Fig. 2
P.M.
end Bass Fig. 3
N.C. (F♯5)
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see bar 48)
Gtr. 3
52
100
Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 simile (see bar 48)
53
B5
A5
54
O (2:40)
N.C. (F♯5)
Gtr. 2
56
1/2
Gtr. 1
P.M.
Bass


P (2:50)
59
P.M.
(w/light wah)
P.M.
*Notes start out played slightly behind the beat, then gradually accelerating up to tempo.
Bass
Gtr. 2
61
Gtr. 1
Bass


Q (3:01)
B5
A5 N.C.(F♯5)
Gtr. 3
63
Gtr. 1
(pick scrape)
Gtr. 2
P.M.
Bass

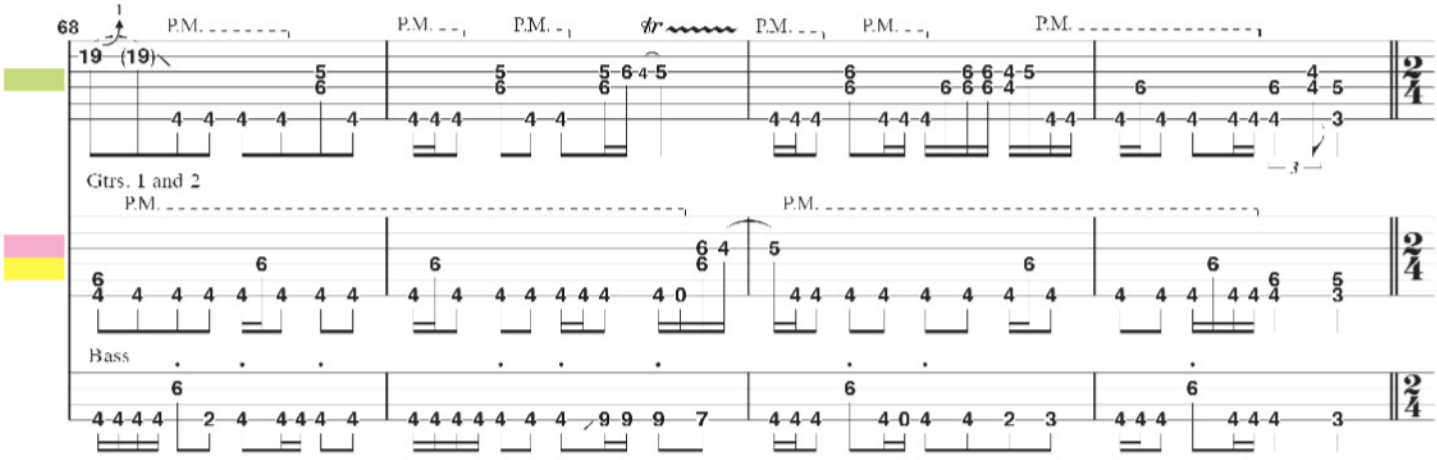


R **3rd Verse** (3:11)

Everybody use your hands Grab ahold of that wheel Everybody press on the gas 'til your back tires peel now

G♯5 G5

Gtr. 3

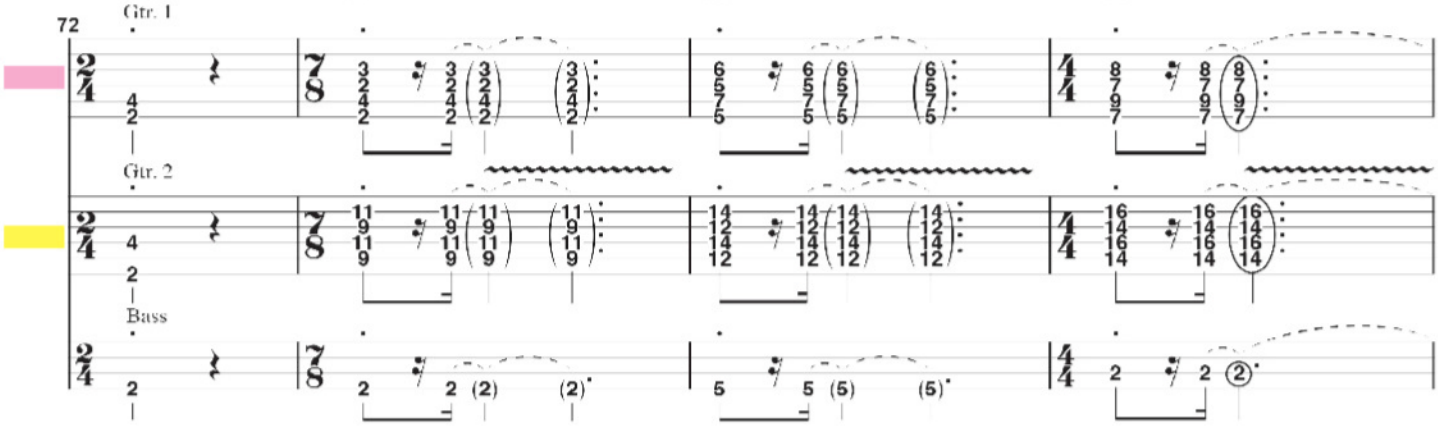


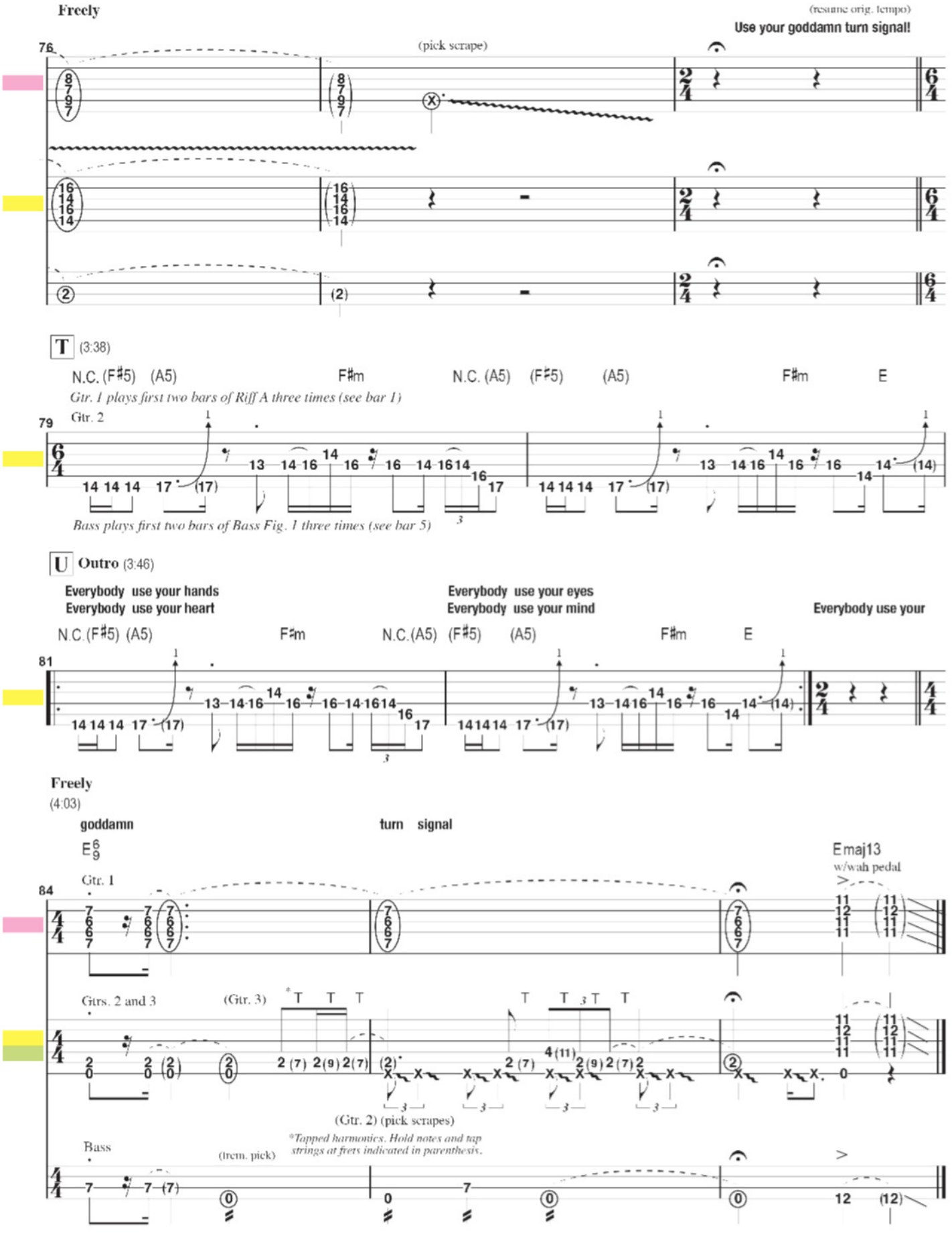
S (3:22) (grad. decrease tempo)

Everybody use your goddamn goddamn goddamn

F♯5 F♯7 A7 B7

Gtr. 1




Freely
(resume orig. tempo)
Use your goddamn turn signal!
76
(pick scrape)
T (3:38)
N.C. (F♯5) (A5)
F♯m
N.C. (A5) (F♯5) (A5)
F♯m
E
Gtr. 1 plays first two bars of Riff A three times (see bar 1)
Gtr. 2
79
Bass plays first two bars of Bass Fig. 1 three times (see bar 5)
U Outro (3:46)
Everybody use your hands
Everybody use your heart
Everybody use your eyes
Everybody use your mind
Everybody use your
N.C.(F♯5) (A5)
F♯m
N.C.(A5) (F♯5) (A5)
F♯m
E
81
Freely
(4:03)
goddamn
turn signal
E6/9
Emaj13
w/wah pedal
84
Gtr. 1
Gtrs. 2 and 3
(Gtr. 3)
(Gtr. 2) (pick scrapes)
Bass
(trem. pick)
*Topped harmonics. Hold notes and tap strings at frets indicated in parenthesis.

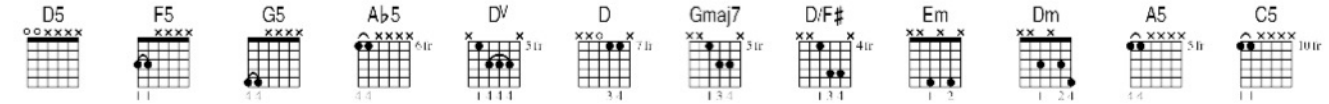
"OUTSHINED"

Soundgarden

As heard on **BADMOTORFINGER**

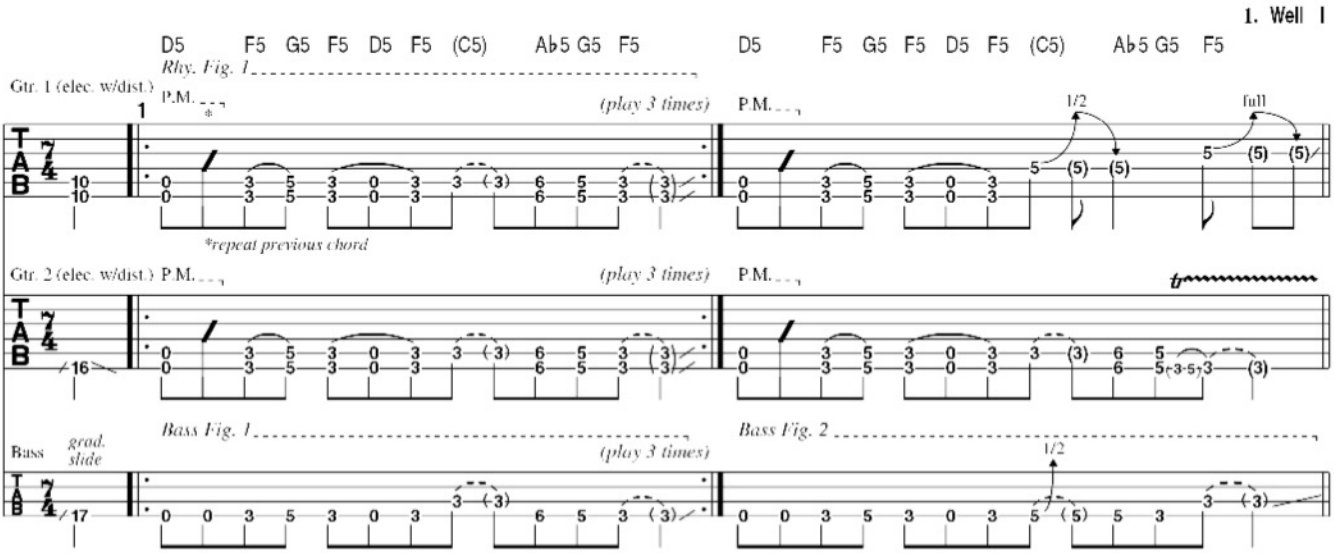
Words and Music by **CHRIS CORNELL** • *Transcribed by* **KERRY O'BRIEN** *and* **ANDY ALEDORT**

All guitars are in drop-D tuning (low to high: D A D G B E).
Bass tuning (low to high): D A D G.



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately Slow ♩ = 94



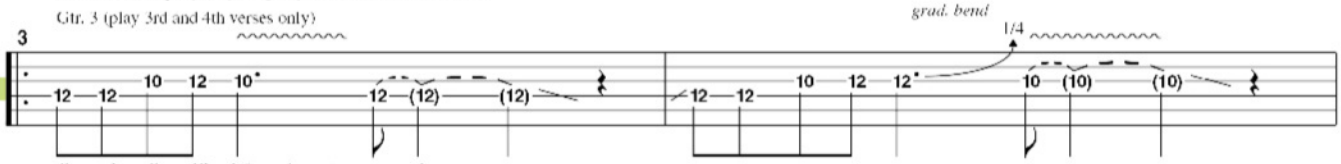
B **Verses** (0:18, 0:40, 2:03, 2:25)

(1.) got up feeling so down I got off being sold out I've
(2.) just looked in the mirror and things aren't looking so good I'm
(3.) someone let the dogs out They'll show you where the truth is The
(4.) feeling that I'm sober even though I'm drinking But I

D5 F5 G5 F5 D5 F5 (C5) A♭5 G5 F5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see meas. 1)

Gtr. 3 (play 3rd and 4th verses only)

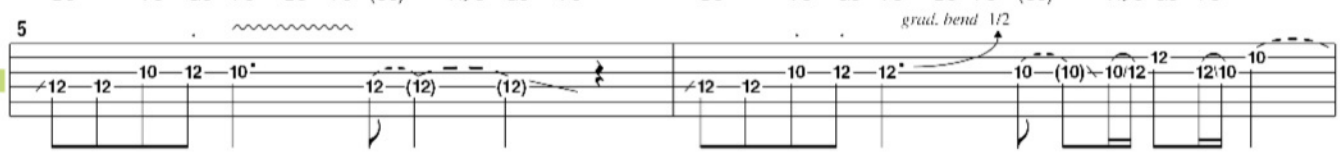


Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see meas. 1)

1., 3.

kept the looking movie California rolling but the story's getting old now Oh
grass is can't get always any greener lower and where the dogs are shedding Oh

D5 F5 G5 F5 D5 F5 (C5) A♭5 G5 F5



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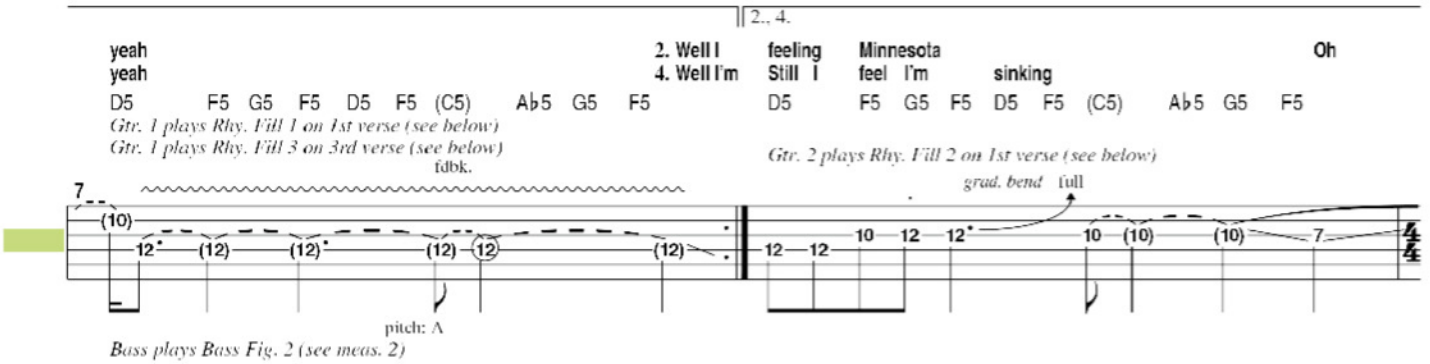
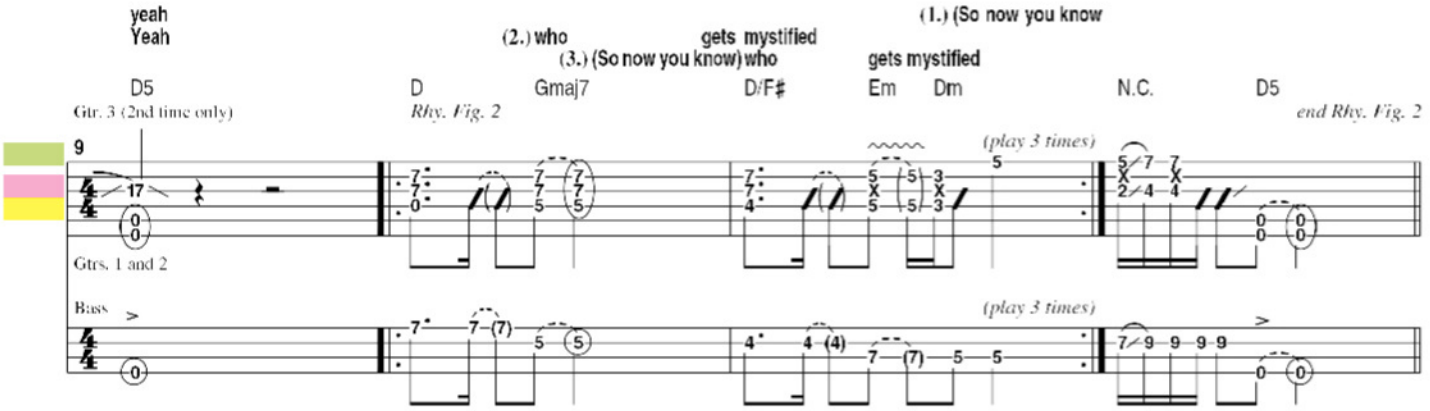
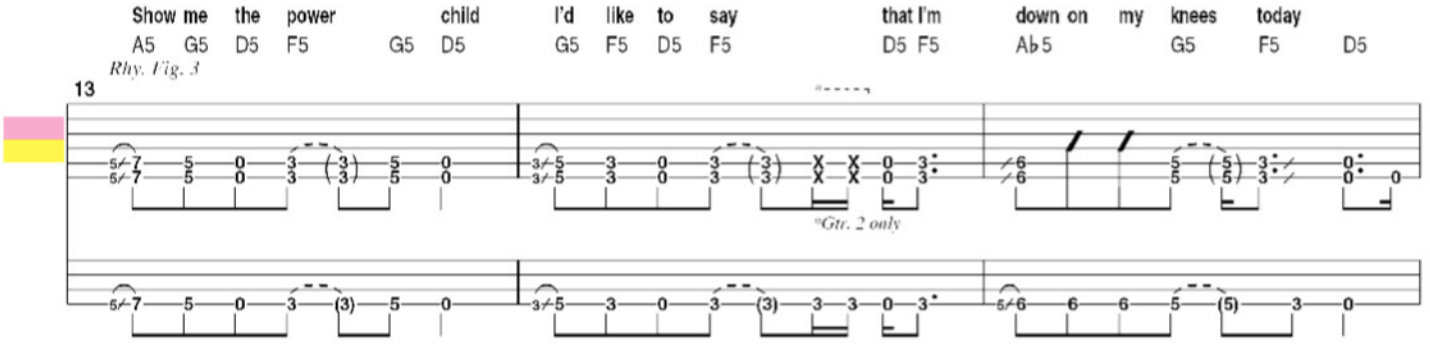
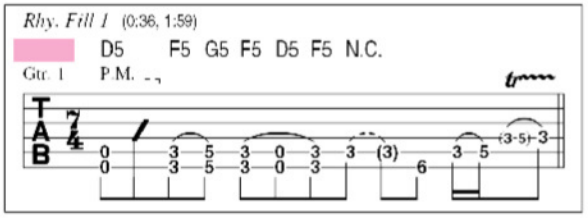


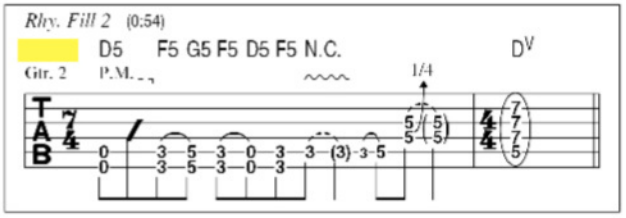
C **Pre-chorus** (1:01, 2:46, 4:01)

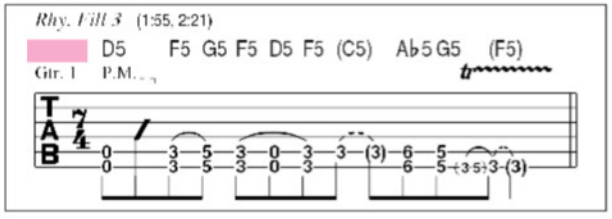


D **Chorus** (1:18, 3:03, 4:18)

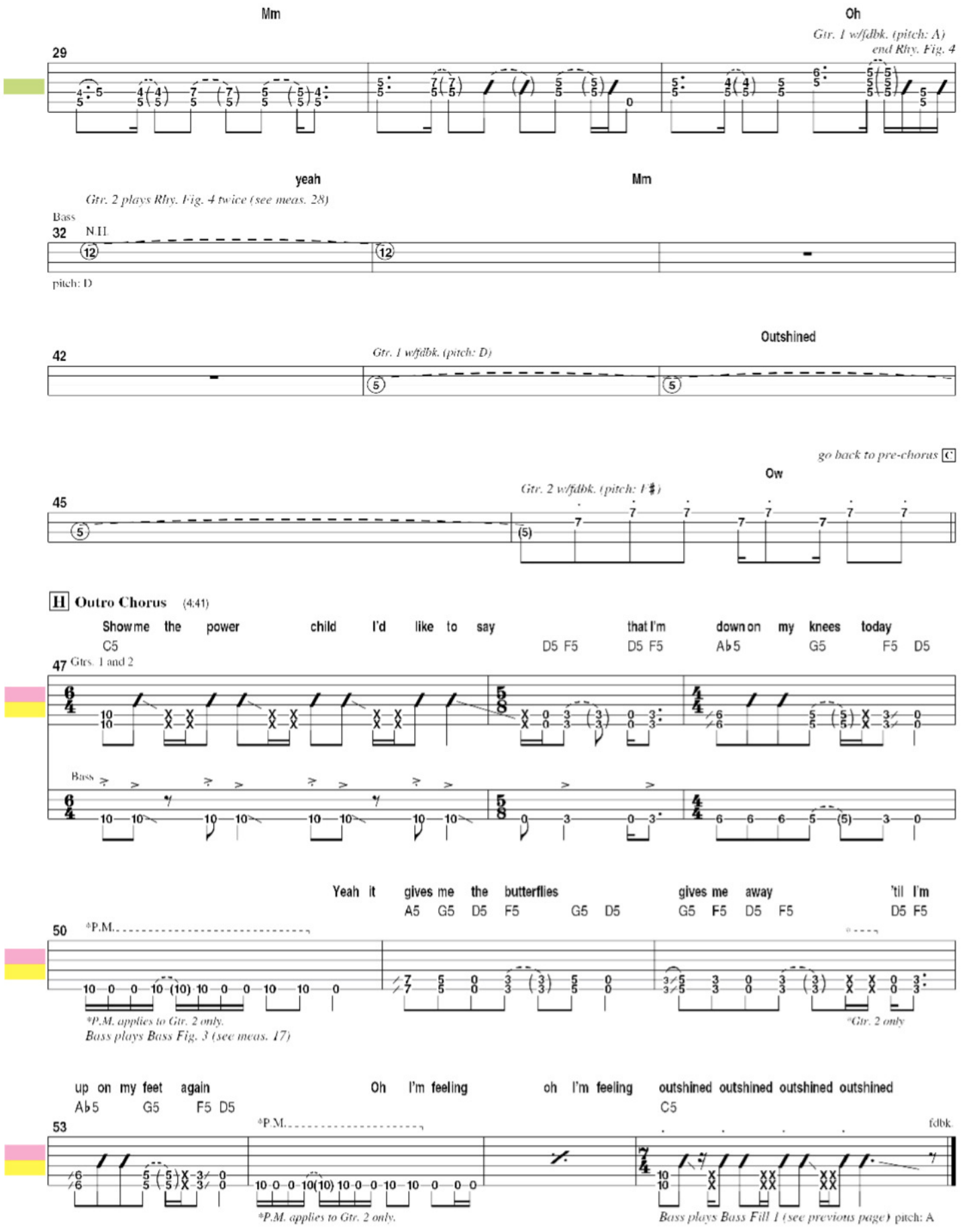








Yeah it gives me the butterflies gives me away 'til I'm
A5 G5 D5 F5 G5 D5 G5 F5 D5 F5 D5 F5
16
*P.M.
*P.M. applies to Gtr. 2 only.
*Gtr. 2 only
Bass Fig. 3
(2nd time) skip ahead to F
(3rd time) skip ahead to outro chorus H
up on my feet again Hey I'm feeling oh I'm feeling outshined outshined outshined outshined
Ab5 G5 F5 D5 C5
19
*P.M.
(repeat previous measure)
Gtr. 2
*P.M. applies to Gtr. 2 only.
Gtr. 1
end Bass Fig. 3
Bass Fill 1
E Interlude (1:46)
Oh yeah Mm
D5 F5 G5 F5 D5 F5 (C5) Ab5 G5 F5 D5 F5 G5 F5 D5 F5 (C5) Ab5 G5 F5
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 three times (see meas. 1)
23
Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)
1/4
1/2
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 three times (see meas. 1)
go back to verse B
Hey
3. Well
D5 F5 G5 F5 D5 F5 (C5) Ab5 G5 F5 D5 F5 G5 F5 D5 F5 (C5) Ab5 G5 F5
Gtr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fill 3 (see previous page)
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fill 1 (see previous page)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 4 (see below)
25
full
full
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see meas. 2)
F (3:26)
G (3:31)
outshined outshined outshined outshined
C5 N.C.(D5)
27
Rhy. Fig. 1
Bass plays Bass Fill 1 (see below)
*Gtr. 1 holds D5 chord for next 12 measures
Rhy. Fill 4 (1:59)
D5 F5 G5 F5 D5 F5 N.C.
Gtr. 2 P.M.
full full
Bass Fill 1 (3:26, 5:03)


Mm
Oh
Gtr. 1 w/fdbk. (pitch: A)
end Rhy. Fig. 4
29
yeah
Mm
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 twice (see meas. 28)
Bass
32
N.H.
pitch: D
Outshined
42
Gtr. 1 w/fdbk. (pitch: D)
go back to pre-chorus C
Ow
Gtr. 2 w/fdbk. (pitch: F♯)
45
H Outro Chorus (4:41)
Show me the power child I'd like to say that I'm down on my knees today
C5 D5 F5 D5 F5 A♭5 G5 F5 D5
47
Gtrs. 1 and 2
Bass
Yeah it gives me the butterflies gives me away 'til I'm
A5 G5 D5 F5 G5 D5 G5 F5 D5 F5 D5 F5
50
*P.M.
*P.M. applies to Gtr. 2 only.
Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see meas. 17)
*Gtr. 2 only
up on my feet again Oh I'm feeling oh I'm feeling outshined outshined outshined outshined
A♭5 G5 F5 D5 C5
53
*P.M.
fdbk.
*P.M. applies to Gtr. 2 only.
Bass plays Bass Fill 1 (see previous page) pitch: A

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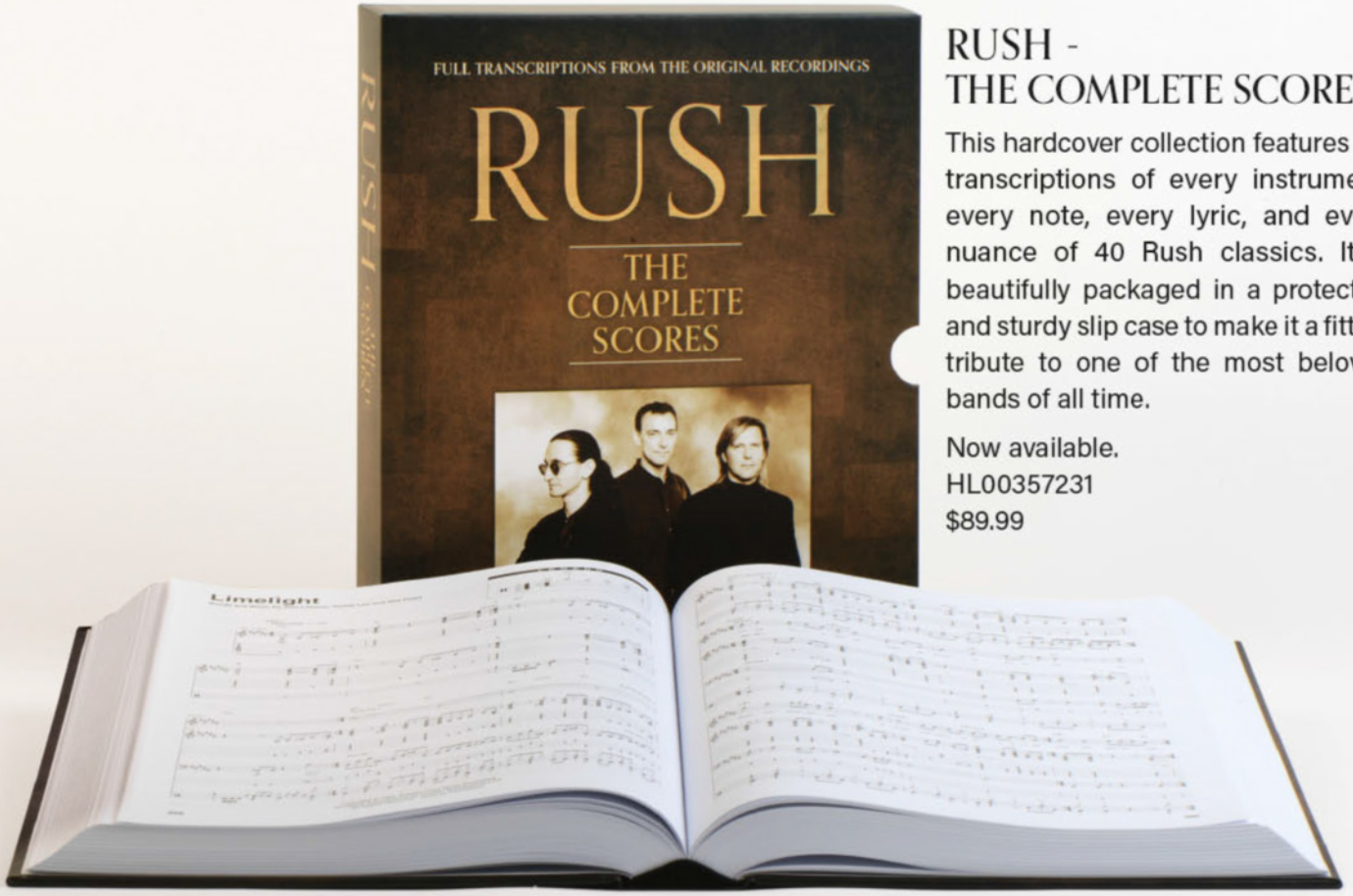

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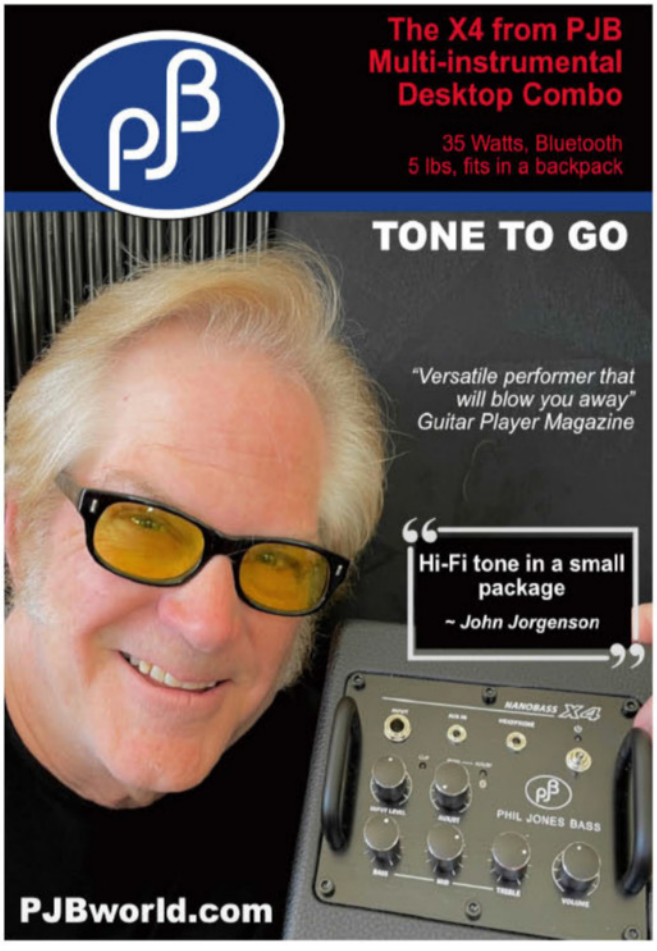
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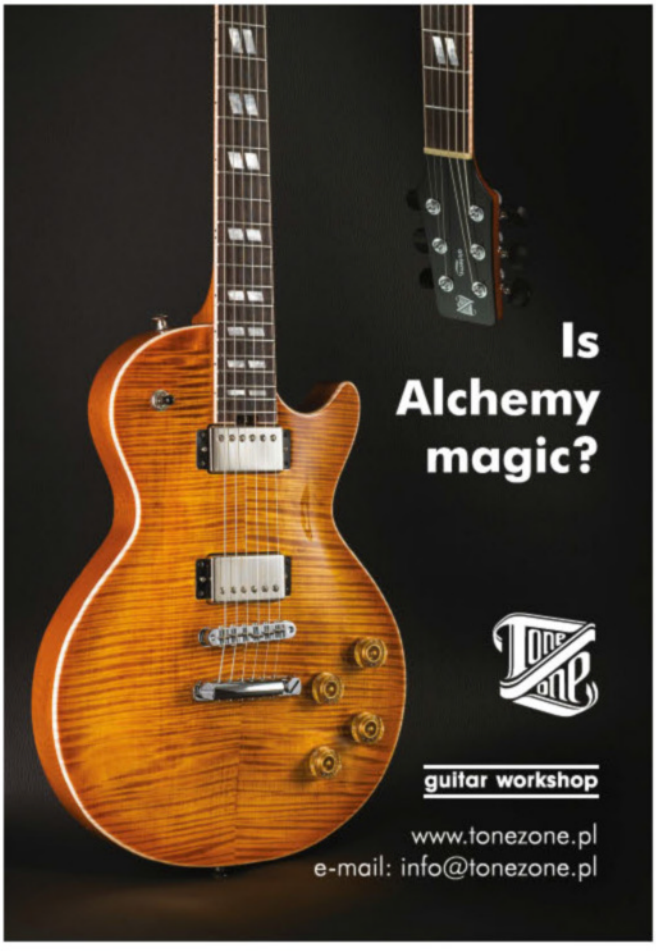
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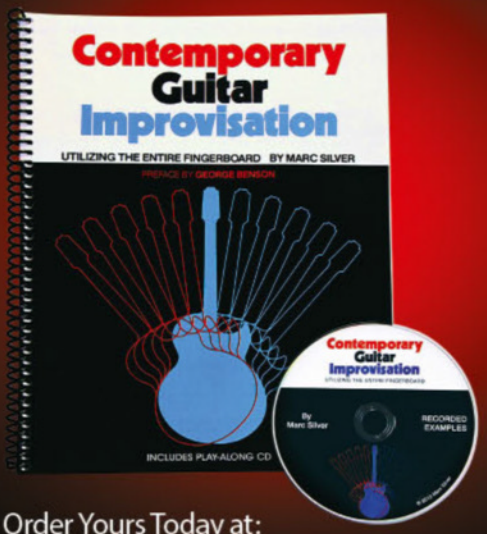

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BY CHRIS GILL

1958-60 FENDER BASSMAN 5F6A

CATEGORY: COMBO AMPLIFIER

THE TWEED FENDER 4x10 Bassman combo "may be the best-sounding guitar amp Fender ever made," wrote Groove Tubes founder Aspen Pittman in *The Tube Amp Book*. That's a pretty grand statement considering that dozens of Fender amps, including models like the Deluxe/Deluxe Reverb, Dual Professional/Super, Princeton Reverb, Super Reverb, Twin/Twin Reverb and Vibroverb, their tweed, blonde, brown and blackface variants, more obscure, shorter-lived models like the Harvard, 3x10 Bandmaster and Vibro King and even the diminutive tweed Champ all have rabid fans. But considering the long and illustrious history of the tweed 4x10 Bassman, particularly its role in the development of the modern guitar amp, it's hard to argue against that statement.

When guitarists wax poetic about the tweed Bassman, usually they're referring to the 5F6A circuit that Fender produced from 1958-60. The first Bassman amps introduced in 1952 had a single 15-inch speaker, followed in 1954 Fender by the first Bassman combo with four 10-inch speakers. Fender produced four different circuits before refining the legendary 5F6A circuit that Bassman aficionados consider the ultimate version. The magic of this circuit was a combination of alterations, improvements and upgrades made over the years, including a cathode follower tone stack with midrange control, a presence control, a GZ334 tube rectifier and a long-tail-pair phase inverter that provided improved clean headroom. A pair of 5881 tubes delivered 45 watts of output, and four 10-inch Jensen alnico speakers kept the bass tight and focused to please its intended customer base, while providing sweet, harmonically rich midrange and crystalline treble that sound great with guitar.

Although Fender dramatically altered the Bassman design in 1960 with the introduction of its first piggyback version featuring the 6G6 circuit, the 5F6A's immortal status was cemented a few years later in 1962 when Marshall essentially copied the circuit for its first amp, the JTM45. Many amps that have followed over the subsequent decades, including high-gain Soldanos and 5150s, have a lot of 5F6A DNA in their circuits that has remained intact throughout the years.

The tweed Bassman is also immortal for the role that it played in music from the late Fifties onward. It was initially heard in Buddy Holly's rock 'n' roll, Buddy Guy's blues and even country music via Luther Perkins with Johnny Cash. During the Seventies the tweed Bassman lived on, thanks to players like Roy Buchanan, Howard Leese with Heart, Robbie Robertson, Bruce Springsteen and many others. Jimmie and Steve Ray Vaughan revived the Bassman as the amp *du jour* for blues enthusiasts during the late Eighties and early Nineties.

In 1990, the 4x10 Bassman became the first tweed model reissued by Fender, kicking off a highly popular revival of Fender tweed amps that continues to this day.

A '51 Fender Nocaster [*left*] and a '54 Tele lean against a '58 Fender Bassman

[*above*] Nirvana's *Nevermind* and Pearl Jam's *Lost Dogs*, the respective homes of "Drain You" and "Yellow Ledbetter"

SUGGESTED SETTINGS

"Yellow Ledbetter" clean (Strat with middle/neck pickup setting)

Presence: 7
Middle: 8
Bass: 4
Treble: 5
Vol. Bright: 4
Vol. Normal: 0, Input: Bright 1

"Drain You" grunge crunch (Fender-style guitar with bridge humbucker)

Presence: 5
Middle: 8
Bass: 6
Treble: 7
Vol. Bright: 8
Vol. Normal: 5
Input: Bright 1

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